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A POET'S  
ANTHOLOGY OF  
POEMS

BY  
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"

DEDICATED  
TO  
MY FATHER



## PREFACE

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“THE future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay.” So wrote Matthew Arnold in 1880, and at the present moment it may be useful to survey anew his reasons for that utterance. They were the subject of much controversy in his own lifetime, but at the present day the most fiercely debated of his premisses is established as almost a platitude. “There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialised itself in the fact; it has attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything; the rest is a world

of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea *is* the fact. The strongest part of our religion to-day is its unconscious poetry."

These words deserve the attention which their author evidently (for he repeats them elsewhere) desired them to have. They deserve it because they embody a response to a question which has never been directly answered, and perhaps never will be answered in the fixed form of a definition, the old question—What *is* poetry?

Is it possible to extort its secret? There has been much illogical wrestling with the Angel of poetry, whose harmony and reason are so absolute that our intellectual limbs have hitherto been writhen in that unequal contest at one touch of the celestial finger; but the progress of the last generation or two has added greatly to our resources. We know better, at any rate, than to attempt to grapple with him at close quarters. We have begun to ask whether we may not range ourselves on his side, whether some communion may not be possible. Religion, certainly, finding him her strongest friend, desires this. But we may go further to-day than Matthew Arnold could foresee. It is not only the wrestling creeds and dogmas whose intellectual limbs

have been writhen by a touch of the Angel's finger. We may turn on Science itself with its own ancient question and cry, "Pilate, what *is* truth?" At the present moment there is not a creed of ethics which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma of rationalism which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition of materialism which does not threaten to dissolve. It is not that science and philosophy have followed the wrong path. Amid their own tribulations and martyrdoms they have held inexorably to the truth so far as they could see it; but their glimpses of truth are leading them to a conclusion that they did not foresee. They placed their faith in the fact, as we may say, and now the fact is failing them. Their matter, their molecules, their first principles are literally opening before them infinite gates into—what shall we say? Wherever they thought they had a fundamental fact, a basis for their systems of thought, they have only—on every side—an immeasurable and incomprehensible miracle. On every side, more silently, perhaps, than in temples made with hands, but not less reverently, all true men of science are bowing the head. The old kind of materialistic science has no meaning now, except in the fuddled brains pro-

duced by half-knowledge and cheap education. There is no such thing as "atheism" except on the tubs of Hyde Park, and even there it is only a piteous cry for the light. The strongest part of our philosophy to-day is its unconscious poetry!

This statement does not detract from the work of Darwin any more than it detracts from the work of Carlyle. Both—to take an old metaphor—were ascending the same sacred mountain, though from different sides, and they meet on the summit. How many heart-burnings and tragic dilemmas would have been avoided when the drawing-rooms of the Victorian era were so amazingly fluttered by the publication of *The Descent of Man*, if only the book itself had been read and mastered by those who feared its "tendency." How much more would have been avoided, what a sure stay would have been found, had the tremblers been well acquainted with their own poetry, to which the chief ideas in Darwin's theories had in many of their aspects long been familiar. Half-knowledge is ever the enemy. Poetry has ever exalted truth to heaven, and truth has ever accepted the invitation. Here, for instance, is a paragraph from *The Descent of Man*—a paragraph that may seem almost startling in its simplicity, amid the blaze of modern pyrotechnics.



“I am aware,” wrote Darwin, “that some of the conclusions arrived at in this work will be denounced by some as highly irreligious; but he who denounces them is bound to show why it is more irreligious to explain the origin of man as a distinct species by descent from some lower form, through the laws of variation and natural selection, than to explain the birth of the individual through the laws of ordinary reproduction. The birth both of the species and of the individual are equally parts of that grand sequence of events, which our minds refuse to accept as the result of blind chance. The understanding revolts at such a conclusion.”

The understanding revolts! In that short, sharp summary of the attitude of Darwin towards the “blind chance” systems of the sciolists we have the testimony of the world’s greatest materialistic man of science, whose powers were devoted almost entirely to what he could touch or handle or see on this planet itself, and whose intellect worked with a vast machine-like accuracy over the whole field—necessarily limited—of its operations.

The understanding revolts from doubt of what must be the basis of every sane intellect, a condition of all thought, namely, an unhesitating accept-

ance of the fundamental order and harmony of the universe, an acceptance as implicit as our much less logical certainty that the sun will rise to-morrow. That basis of the universe in an ultimate harmony is the first postulate and axiom of all thought, all science, all art. Without it, there is nothing left to us that has the slightest meaning. The sciolist who denies a positive ultimate meaning to the universe is in a very ridiculous position indeed if from such a quagmire he presents us with his baseless philosophy. He can have not the slightest justification for stringing a single sentence together. He has pulverised the foundations of all logic, and his words can have no more logical, orderly, or harmonious connection than the babble of an idiot smitten with aphasia.

We are on firm enough ground here, in the last entrenchment, to find, if we do not already possess, the courage of our opinions, although there are many 'writers of distinction,' some of them with a "European reputation," who solemnly discuss whether our world be not "an accident." It would be cruel to analyse the problems they raise with too keen a scrutiny, cruel to peruse too closely the meanings based on meaninglessness, and spun out of nothingness by the baseless brain of an Accident

from Nowhere. But solemn books are annually produced on this basis by "writers of distinction," and those who might be usually unwilling to break their silence merely to re-affirm the elementary principles of all thought. One result is that many perplexed gropers after truth are over-clouded by pessimistic doubts that certainly blind them to the real splendour of great art. The little negations of the Patchouli poets mean more to them than the flaming heavens of Milton. An epigram at the expense of his noble simplicity means more than all the sublime poetry of Wordsworth. For these, the secret of great poetry would almost seem to have been forgotten. Yet, even here, there are signs of the truth of Matthew Arnold's prophecy, in the popularity of that translation of a Persian poet by Fitzgerald, a glorious poem, which (while apparently pandering to the melancholy satisfaction of their agnostic, and literally know-nothing, philosophy) is by virtue of its poetry a more celestial and positive pandar than they know. "He knows about it all, He knows, He knows!"

What, then, is this secret of great poetry—we could say all great art, but we are concerned here with only one form of it—in which so clear and precise a critic as Matthew Arnold could affirm

that our race will come to find an ever surer and surer stay? It is simply this—that all great poetry, all great art, brings us into touch, into communion with that harmony which is the basis of the universe, the harmony in which all our discords are resolved. All great art does this, and this is the one test of its greatness. It does not follow that great art must be didactic or philosophical, any more than that there must be a definite moral to every great story. But all great art shows the relation between its subject and the Eternal harmonies. A broken boat or an old tree-stump will serve as a subject for great art, if the artist can hold them up against the light of Eternity. Turner's picture of the "Fighting Temeraire towed to her last resting-place" is a popular but perfect example of great art, and the difference between that picture and the majority of merely pleasant sea-pictures is simply in the perfection of the relation established between the temporal details and the light of Eternity.

This relation can be established in a thousand ways as the spirit moves the artist. Tragedy is not only a purging of the soul, it is a sloughing off of the temporal for the Eternal, and that is why in its greatness it is sublime. There

is no sublimity in meaningless annihilation, the death of an insubstantial toad under a nonsensical harrow ; but there is sublimity in Hamlet's dying cry to his friend who would fain follow him—

“ Absent thee from felicity awhile,”

the only commentary upon which is—“ God so loved the world.” In tragedy it is obvious that the things of Eternity are affirmed or postulated only by an inspired denial of the merely temporal. But mere denial, mere negation, can never be great art. When Macbeth cries, “ Out, out, brief candle !” he is not coldly asserting as a scientific fact that man's life is brief and worthless. His words may superficially support that conclusion ; but that is not the whole of their import or content. The words have an emotional side crying out in anguish against that conclusion. They have that strange, deep, harmonious import of the greatest poetry, which is only vouchsafed to us when (as our fathers believed might happen to a man praying) some mysterious sluices are opened between the soul of man and the Infinite, and the Deep comes flooding in. Many generations of our fathers have understood this seeming paradox that the words proclaiming all things to be vanity, over and above that proclamation,

may postulate a passionate gospel. The cry of Macbeth has something of the same emotional content as the book of Ecclesiastes—and it goes to swell the terrible cry of Calvary, “Why hast thou forsaken me?”

This book contains some of the greatest lyrical poetry in the English language, arranged with a view to the elucidation of the great positive values which all great art contains. Such an arrangement is necessarily arbitrary, divisions will over-lap, and those who look for a definite philosophy will find statements as varied as those of Ecclesiastes and the Sermon on the Mount. But taking their deeper values, and allowing each poem to be elucidated by its neighbours, according to the plan of the book, there may be a few readers who will find in the body of this volume something of what Matthew Arnold promised them, and find it more easily than in the usual kind of anthology. Three poems which have a special appeal to our own times are Matthew Arnold’s “Morality,” Tennyson’s “Wages,” and the “Last Lines” of Emily Brontë. They form something like an irreducible minimum of faith and hope, on which the grander fabric of poems like “Abt Vogler” can find something of a foundation; an irreducible minimum on which the mind can still find foothold,

through its darkest and most disastrous hours. They afford this foothold by the definite facts they give us, quite apart from the great gifts they convey to us by the power and beauty of their art. But this need not be insisted upon, as we are here more concerned with the positive values of art itself, and the way in which great poetry, as an art, brings us into communion with the Eternal Harmonies. Metre and rhythm (and their corresponding principles of harmony in other arts) have no small part to play in this, though they are more a consequence than a cause in all the greatest work. The music of intellectual exaltation, linking all things near and far, has its positive source in that eternal fount of harmony from which this great metrical cosmos, these pulsing hearts and swinging tides and wheeling stars, proceed. All these rhythms and cadences and harmonies of art carry an affirmation with them. They are constructive even when superficially they seem to deny our own limited creeds. In a word, they are literally poetry. Swinburne, denying one idea of God in the hymn to Proserpine, vehemently postulates another idea of God ; and, denying himself the more familiar outlets for religious feeling, re-affirms and worships the Omnipotent and Eternal in his Odes to Victor

Hugo. It is a mistake to think that the terms of the title of a poem usually contain all that the poem itself conveys. These Odes to Victor Hugo, for instance, are, in the most complete sense, acts of idolisation. Swinburne, in other words, insisted on having his own ritual. He may have been wrong in this; but there is no mistaking the "one" ultimate Throne before which he swings this golden censer, the One that remains while the many change and pass:—

"All crowns before this crown  
Triumphantly bow down  
For pride that one more great than all draws nigh:  
All souls applaud, all hearts acclaim,  
One heart benign, one soul supreme, one conquering  
name."

In the same way, point by point and principle by principle, in one poem or another, through his own form of ritual, this so-called anti-Christian re-affirms practically every emotion, and, more than that, every dogma of Christianity. He may write hymns to that one limited power in the universe—Aphrodite; but he cannot shut his eyes to the presence of other and higher powers. It is not to Aphrodite that the bursting breast of cancer must bring its terrible passion; and, when this "anti-Christian" is confronted by the terrible



realities of suffering on our earth, to what heavenly symbol does he turn, as the highest that the human intellect has evoked?—

“O sacred head, O desecrate,  
O labour-wounded feet and hands,  
O blood poured forth in pledge to fate  
Of nameless lives in divers lands,  
O slain and spent and sacrificed  
People, the grey-grown speechless Christ!”

Art—it can never be repeated too often—has its own rituals; and the content of a work of art is not to be apprehended in the same way as that of a text-book of philosophy or science. The poet begins, as it were, from the centre of things, while the philosopher works from the outer circumference along his particular radius towards the centre where all philosophies and sciences will one day meet. The poet’s mind, looking outward from that central security, sees the whole world co-ordinated and linked in harmony, sees that you cannot pluck a flower “without troubling of a star.” The man of science dealing with those details would be concerned with astronomy, or with botany alone; and, though he would hesitatingly admit the absolute logical certainty of the connection between the two sciences, he knows that it has little or no practical value along

his particular radius or immediate line of work. Briefly, the world appears to the poet, in his inspired moments, at any rate, as something like a vast piece of music, wherein each note has its use and is necessary to all the others; and wherein even the discords have a value in some resultant harmony, and are introduced, let us say, as Beethoven will deliberately introduce them for a similar purpose in his most perfect work. This is not an empty figure. It has its foundations, at any rate, in the foundations of logic itself. Every science and every branch of science is working towards the establishment of some such view of the universe. To the poet, as we have said, in his central security, nothing is more certain; and it is easy for him to see not only a beautiful emotion but the plainest of logical conclusions in those wonderful lines of Blake:—

“A skylark wounded on the wing  
Doth make a cherub cease to sing:  
A robin redbreast in a cage  
Puts all heaven in a rage.”

Now the passage I quoted above from Darwin has a continuation. I ended it with his declaration that the understanding revolts from the supposition that the universe is governed by

“blind chance.” Then comes one of the most extraordinary intellectual collapses, one of the most tragic land-slides of the whole fabric of a great man’s mind, that has ever been recorded. He has spoken of “that grand sequence of events, which our minds refuse to accept as the result of blind chance. The understanding revolts at such a conclusion”—here he is writing, though as a scientist, yet with the large grasp of the great Greek dramatists, of Shakespeare and of Beethoven—then suddenly he narrows himself to his little radius of work and sinks to the earth completely by adding, “*whether or not we are able to believe that every slight variation of structure,—the union of each pair in marriage, the dissemination of each seed—and other such events, have all been ordained for some special purpose.*”

In other words, his untrained imagination revolts from accepting the conclusions to which his trained understanding has led him. He is baffled simply by the multiplicity of things, in the same way that some people are afraid to believe in human immortality owing to the largeness of the population of London. This modesty of the intellect is rather akin to that of the lover who wrote to his lady—“I love you passionately, *in my small way.*” Darwin could not believe—he

shows it elsewhere—that every blade of grass, every leaf of every tree, had its exact part in the universal symphony. Worse than that, he could not even believe that what he said of so-called big things applied no less precisely to so-called small things. His understanding revolted from supposing that the larger movements of the stars were the result of blind chance, but his imagination failed him when exactly the same proposition presents itself with regard to the dissemination of seeds. Yet, if our lives were on a much bigger scale, the stars themselves might then seem to us more insignificant than the seeds now appear; and, if human beings were no bigger than ants, the same Charles Darwin would be gravely announcing that his understanding revolted from supposing that the larger affairs of his ant-hill were the result of blind chance, but when it came to a question of the disposition of ants' eggs, he must admit the possibility of a break, a gap in Nature.

Obviously it is all or nothing, and to great art the answer is clear as the sun—"all!" The smallest break in that eternal order and harmony is an immeasurable vacuum of the kind that both art and science abhor; for, if we admit it, the universe has no meaning. The poet demanding

that not a worm should be cloven in vain, or crying with Blake that a robin in a cage shakes heaven with anger, are at one with that profound truth—a sparrow shall not fall to the ground without your Father. The blades of the grass are all numbered. There is no break in the roll of that harmony “whereto the worlds beat time”: and it is because great art brings out, as a conductor with his wand, the harmonies hidden by the dust of daily affairs, that in poetry, as time goes on, our race will come to find an ever surer and surer stay.



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BOOK I  
IN THE BEGINNING



Hymn to Darkness



**H**AIL thou most sacred venerable thing !  
What Muse is worthy thee to sing ?  
Thee, from whose pregnant universal womb  
All things, ev'n Light, thy rival, first did come.  
What dares he not attempt that sings of thee,  
Thou first and greatest mystery ?  
Who can the secrets of thy essence tell ?  
Thou, like the light of God, art inaccessible.

Before great Love this monument did raise,  
This ample theatre of praise ;  
Before the folding circles of the sky  
Were tuned by Him, who is all harmony ;  
Before the morning stars their hymn began,  
Before the council held for man,  
Before the birth of either time or place,  
Thou reign'st unquestioned monarch in the empty  
space.

Thy native lot thou didst to Light resign,  
 But still half of the globe is thine.  
 Here with a quiet, but yet awful hand,  
 Like the best emperors thou dost command.  
 To thee the stars above their brightness owe,  
 And mortals their repose below :  
 To thy protection fear and sorrow flee,  
 And those that weary are of light, find rest in thee.

J. NORRIS OF BEMERTON.

The Word to Chaos



“ ‘ **A**ND thou my Word, begotten Son, by thee  
 This I perform ; speak thou, and be it  
 done.

My overshadowing Spirit and might with thee  
 I send along ; ride forth, and bid the deep  
 Within appointed bounds be heaven and earth ;  
 Boundless the deep, because I AM who fill  
 Infinitude, nor vacuous the space ;  
 Though I uncircumscribed myself retire,  
 And put not forth my goodness, which is free  
 To act, or not, necessity and chance  
 Approach not me, and what I will is fate.’

. . . . .

*Immediate are the acts of God, more swift*

*Than time or motion, but to human ears  
Cannot without process of speech be told,  
So told as earthly notion can receive.*

Great triumph and rejoicing was in heaven,  
When such was heard declared the Almighty's  
will ;

Glory they sung to the Most High, good will  
To future men, and in their dwellings peace.

. . . . .  
“So sang the Hierarchies. Meanwhile the Son  
On his great expedition now appeared,  
Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crowned  
Of majesty divine : sapience and love  
Immense, and all his Father in him shone.  
About his chariot numberless were poured  
Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones,  
And Virtues, wingèd Spirits, and Chariots winged  
From the armoury of God, where stand of old  
Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged  
Against a solemn day, harnessed at hand,  
Celestial equipage ; and now came forth  
Spontaneous, for within them spirit lived,  
Attendant on their Lord : heav’n opened wide  
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound  
On golden hinges moving, to let forth  
The King of Glory, in his powerful Word  
And Spirit coming to create new worlds.

On heavenly ground they stood, and from the  
shore

They viewed the vast immeasurable abyss,  
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,  
Up from the bottom turned by furious winds  
And surging waves, as mountains, to assault  
Heaven's height, and with the centre mix the pole.

“‘Silence, ye troubled waves, and, thou Deep,  
peace,’

Said then th’ omnific Word ; ‘ your discord end.’  
Nor stayed ; but, on the wings of Cherubim  
Uplifted, in Paternal Glory rode  
Far into Chaos and the world unborn ;  
For Chaos heard his voice.

“‘Let there be light,’ said God, and forthwith  
light

Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,  
Sprung from the deep.”

MILTON.

The Tiger    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

TIGER, tiger, burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry ?



In what distant deeps or skies  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder and what art  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And, when thy heart began to beat,  
What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?  
In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? what dread grasp  
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,  
And watered heaven with their tears,  
Did He smile His work to see?  
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

BLAKE.



FROM harmony, from heavenly harmony,  
This universal frame began :  
When nature underneath a heap  
Of jarring atoms lay,  
And could not heave her head,  
The tuneful voice was heard from high,  
Arise, ye more than dead.  
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,  
In order to their stations leap,  
And Music's power obey.  
From harmony, from heavenly harmony  
This universal frame began :  
From harmony to harmony,  
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,  
The diapason closing full in Man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell ?  
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,  
His listening brethren stood around,  
And, wondering, on their faces fell  
To worship that celestial sound.  
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell  
Within the hollow of that shell,  
That spoke so sweetly and so well.  
What passion cannot Music raise and quell ?

The trumpet's loud clangor  
Excites us to arms,  
With shrill notes of anger,  
And mortal alarms.  
The double double double beat  
Of the thundering drum  
Cries, hark ! the foes come ;  
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat.

The soft complaining flute  
In dying notes discovers  
The woes of hopeless lovers,  
Whose dirge is whisper'd by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim  
Their jealous pangs, and desperation,  
Fury, frantic indignation,  
Depth of pains, and height of passion,  
For the fair, disdainful dame.  
But oh ! what art can teach,  
What human voice can reach,  
The sacred organ's praise ?  
Notes inspiring holy love,  
Notes that wing their heavenly ways  
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race ;  
And trees uprooted left their place,  
Sequacious of the lyre :

But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher ;  
When to her organ vocal breath was given,  
An angel heard, and straight appear'd  
Mistaking earth for heaven.

GRAND CHORUS.

As from the power of sacred lays  
The spheres began to move,  
And sung the great Creator's praise  
To all the bless'd above ;  
So when the last and dreadful hour  
This crumbling pageant shall devour,  
The trumpet shall be heard on high,  
The dead shall live, the living die,  
And Music shall untune the sky.

DRYDEN.

Hymn to Light    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

HAIL, holy Light ! offspring of heav'n first-  
born,  
Or of the Eternal co-eternal beam,  
May I express thee unblamed ? since God is light,  
And never but in unapproach'd light  
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee,

Bright effluence of bright essence increate.  
Or hear'st thou rather, pure ethereal stream,  
Whose fountain who shall tell? before the sun,  
Before the heavens thou wert, and at the voice  
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest  
The rising world of waters dark and deep,  
Won from the void and formless infinite.  
Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,  
Escaped the Stygian pool, though long detained  
In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight  
Through utter and through middle darkness  
    borne,  
With other notes than to th' Orphean lyre,<sup>1</sup>  
I sung of Chaos and eternal Night,  
Taught by the heav'nly Muse to venture down  
The dark descent, and up to reascend,  
Though hard and rare : thee I revisit safe,  
And feel thy sov'reign vital lamp ; but thou  
Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain  
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn ;  
So thick a drop serene<sup>2</sup> hath quenched their  
    orbs,  
Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more  
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt

<sup>1</sup> Orpheus wrote a hymn to Night, addressing her as  
"Mother of gods and men."

<sup>2</sup> Milton's blindness was caused by *gutta serena*.

Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,  
 Smit with the love of sacred song ; but chief  
 Thee Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,  
 That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,  
 Nightly I visit ; nor sometimes forget  
 Those other two equalled with me in fate,  
 So were I equalled with them in renown,  
 Blind Thamyris<sup>1</sup> and blind Mæonides,<sup>2</sup>  
 And Tiresias<sup>3</sup> and Phineus,<sup>4</sup> prophets old.  
 Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move  
 Harmonious numbers ; as the wakeful bird  
 Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid  
 Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year  
 Seasons return, but not to me returns  
 Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,  
 Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,  
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine ;  
 But cloud instead, and ever-during dark  
 Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men  
 Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair  
 Presented with a universal blank  
 Of nature's works to me expunged and rased,  
 And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.  
 So much the rather thou, celestial Light,

<sup>1</sup> A Thracian who invented the Doric measures.

<sup>2</sup> Homer.

<sup>3</sup> A blind Theban prophet (Newton).

<sup>4</sup> King of Arcadia.

Shine inward, and the mind through all her  
powers

Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence  
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell  
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

MILTON.

The Morning Song of the Birds    ♪    ♪    ♪

THE lark sitting upon his earthy bed, just as  
the morn

Appears, listen silent, then springing from the  
waving cornfield

Loud he leads the choir of Day: *thrill! thrill!*  
*thrill!*

Mounting upon the wings of light into the great  
expanse,

Reaching against the lovely blue and shining  
heavenly skies;

His little throat labours with inspiration; every  
feather

On throat and breast and wings vibrates with  
the effluence divine,

All nature listens silent to him, and the awful sun  
Stands still upon the mountain looking on the little  
bird

With eyes of soft humility, and wonder, love and  
awe.

Then loud from their green covert all the birds  
begin their song :

The thrush, the linnet, and the gold-finch, robin  
and the wren,

Awake the sun from his sweet reverie on the  
mountain.

BLAKE.

The Morning Scent of the Flowers      ∞      ∞

THOU perceivest the flowers put forth their  
precious odours,

And none can tell how from so small a centre  
come such sweets,

Forgetting that within that centre Eternity  
expands

Its ever-during doors, that Og and Anak fiercely  
guard.

First ere the morning breaks, joy opens in the  
flowery bosoms,

Joy even to tears, which the sun rising dries : first  
the wild thyme,

And meadowsweet, downy, and soft waving among  
the reeds,



Light springing on the air lead the sweet dance ;  
they wake  
The honeysuckle sleeping on the oak, the flaunting  
beauty  
Revels along upon the wind ; the white-thorn lovely  
May  
Opens her many lovely eyes ; listening, the rose  
still sleeps,  
None dare to wake her ; soon she bursts her  
crimson-curtained bed,  
And comes forth in the majesty of beauty. Every  
flower,  
The pink, the jessamine, the wall-flower and the  
carnation,  
The jonquil ; the mild lily opens her leaves ; every  
tree  
And flower and herb soon fill the air with an  
innumerable dance,  
Yet all in order, sweet and lovely. Men are sick  
with Love.

BLAKE.



BOOK II

THE SWEET O' THE YEAR



The Song of Enitharmon    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

ARISE, you little glancing wings, and sing  
your infant joy,  
Arise and drink your bliss,  
For everything that lives is holy, for the source of  
life  
Descends to be a weeping babe,  
For the earth-worm renews the moisture of the  
sandy plain.

Now my left hand I stretch abroad even to earth  
beneath,  
And strike the terrible string,  
I wake sweet joy in dew of sorrow, and I plant  
a smile  
In forests of affliction,  
And wake the bubbling springs of life in regions  
of dark death.

BLAKE.

To a Skylark



HAIL to thee, blithe Spirit!  
Bird thou never wert,  
That from Heaven, or near it,  
Pourest thy full heart  
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher  
From the earth thou springest  
Like a cloud of fire ;  
The blue deep thou wingest,  
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever  
singest.

In the golden lightning  
Of the sunken sun,  
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,  
Thou dost float and run ;  
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even  
Melts around thy flight ;  
Like a star of Heaven,  
In the broad daylight  
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill  
delight,

Keen as are the arrows  
Of that silver sphere,  
Whose intense lamp narrows  
In the white dawn clear,  
Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air  
With thy voice is loud,  
As, when night is bare,  
From one lonely cloud  
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is  
overflowed.

What thou art we know not ;  
What is most like thee ?  
From rainbow clouds there flow not  
Drops so bright to see  
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a Poet hidden  
In the light of thought,  
Singing hymns unbidden,  
Till the world is wrought  
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not :

Like a high-born maiden  
In a palace-tower,

Soothing her love-laden  
Soul in secret hour  
With music sweet as love, which overflows her  
bower :

Like a glow-worm golden  
In a dell of dew,  
Scattering unbeholden  
Its aëreal hue  
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it  
from the view :

Like a rose embowered  
In its own green leaves,  
By warm winds deflowered,  
Till the scent it gives  
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-  
wingèd thieves :

Sound of vernal showers  
On the twinkling grass,  
Rain-awakened flowers,  
All that ever was  
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth  
surpass :



Teach us, Sprite or Bird,  
What sweet thoughts are thine :  
I have never heard  
Praise of love or wine  
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,  
Or triumphal chant,  
Matched with thine would be all  
But an empty vaunt,  
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden  
want.

What objects are the fountains  
Of thy happy strain ?  
What fields, or waves, or mountains ?  
What shapes of sky or plain ?  
What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of  
pain ?

With thy clear keen joyance  
Languor cannot be :  
Shadow of annoyance  
Never came near thee :  
Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,  
Thou of death must deem  
Things more true and deep  
Than we mortals dream,  
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal  
stream?

We look before and after,  
And pine for what is not :  
Our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught ;  
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest  
thought.

Yet if we could scorn  
Hate, and pride, and fear ;  
If we were things born  
Not to shed a tear,  
I know not how thy joy we ever should come  
near.

Better than all measures  
Of delightful sound,  
Better than all treasures  
That in books are found,  
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground !

Teach me half the gladness  
That thy brain must know,  
Such harmonious madness  
From my lips would flow,  
The world should listen then—as I am listening  
now.

SHELLEY.

The Rainbow      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪

MY heart leaps up when I behold  
A rainbow in the sky :  
So was it when I was a child,  
So is it now I am a man,  
So let it be when I grow old,  
Or let me die :  
The child is father to the man,  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety.

WORDSWORTH.

Corinna's going a-Maying      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪

GET up, get up for shame, the blooming morn  
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.  
See how Aurora throws her fair  
Fresh-quilted colours through the air :

Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see  
The dew bespangling herb and tree.  
Each flower has wept, and bowed toward the east  
Above an hour since, yet you not dressed,  
Nay! not so much as out of bed;  
When all the birds have matins said,  
And sung their thankful hymns: 'tis sin,  
Nay, profanation to keep in,  
Whenas a thousand virgins on this day  
Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

Rise, and put on your foliage, and be seen  
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and  
green,  
And sweet as Flora. Take no care  
For jewels for your gown or hair:  
Fear not, the leaves will strew  
Gems in abundance upon you:  
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept  
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept.  
Come, and receive them while the light  
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night,  
And Titan on the eastern hill  
Retires himself, or else stands still  
Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in  
praying:  
Few beads are best, when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come ; and coming, mark  
How each field turns a street, each street a park  
    Made green, and trimmed with trees : see  
    how  
Devotion gives each house a bough  
Or branch ; each porch, each door, ere  
    this,  
An ark, a tabernacle is,  
Made up of white-thorn neatly interwove,  
As if here were those cooler shades of love.  
    Can such delights be in the street  
    And open fields, and we not see't ?  
Come, we'll abroad, and let's obey  
The proclamation made for May :  
And sin no more, as we have done, by staying ;  
But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl, this day,  
But is got up and gone to bring in May.  
    A deal of youth, ere this, is come  
    Back, and with white-thorn laden home.  
Some have despatched their cakes and  
    cream  
Before that we have left to dream :  
And some have wept, and wooed and plighted  
    troth,  
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth :

Many a green gown has been given ;  
Many a kiss, both odd and even :  
Many a glance, too, has been sent  
From out the eye, love's firmament :  
Many a jest told of the key's betraying  
This night, and locks picked, yet we're not a-  
Maying.

Come, let us go, while we are in our prime,  
And take the harmless folly of the time.  
We shall grow old apace and die  
Before we know our liberty.  
Our life is short, and our days run  
As fast away as does the sun :  
And as a vapour, or a drop of rain  
Once lost, can ne'er be found again :  
So when or you or I are made  
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,  
All love, all liking, all delight,  
Lies drowned with us in endless night.  
Then while time serves, and we are but decaying,  
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

HERRICK.

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers  
From the seas and the streams ;  
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid  
In their noonday dreams.  
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken  
The sweet buds every one,  
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,  
As she dances about the sun.  
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,  
And whiten the green plains under,  
And then again I dissolve it in rain,  
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,  
And their great pines groan aghast ;  
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,  
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.  
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,  
Lightning my pilot sits ;  
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,  
It struggles and howls at fits ;  
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,  
This pilot is guiding me,  
Lured by the love of the genii that move  
In the depths of the purple sea ;

Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,  
Over the lakes and the plains,  
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,  
The Spirit he loves remains ;  
And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,  
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,  
And his burning plumes outspread,  
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,  
When the morning star shines dead ;  
As on the jag of a mountain crag,  
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,  
An eagle alit one moment may sit  
In the light of its golden wings.  
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea  
beneath,  
Its ardour of rest and of love,  
And the crimson pall of eve may fall  
From the depth of Heaven above,  
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,  
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,  
Whom mortals call the Moon,  
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,  
By the midnight breezes strewn ;



And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,  
Which only the angels hear,  
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,  
The stars peep behind her and peer ;  
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,  
Like a swarm of golden bees,  
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,  
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,  
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,  
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone,  
And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl ;  
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and  
swim,  
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.  
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,  
Over a torrent sea,  
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,—  
The mountains its columns be.  
The triumphal arch through which I march  
With hurricane, fire, and snow,  
When the Powers of the air are chained to my  
chair,  
Is the million-coloured bow ;  
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,  
While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,  
And the nursling of the Sky ;  
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;  
I change, but I cannot die.  
For after the rain when with never a stain  
The pavilion of Heaven is bare,  
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex  
gleams,  
Build up the blue dome of air,  
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,  
And out of the caverns of rain,  
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from  
the tomb,  
I arise and unbuild it again.

SHELLEY.

The Poet's Song    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
He passed by the town and out of the  
street,  
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,  
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,  
And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,  
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,  
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly,  
The snake slipt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,  
And stared, with his foot on the prey,  
And the nightingale thought, "I have sung many  
songs,  
But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
When the years have died away."

TENNYSON.

Chorus



THE world's great age begins anew,  
The golden years return,  
The earth doth like a snake renew  
Her winter weeds outworn :  
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,  
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains  
From waves serener far ;  
A new Peneus rolls his fountains  
Against the morning star.  
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep  
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,  
    Fraught with a later prize ;  
Another Orpheus sings again,  
    And loves, and weeps, and dies.  
A new Ulysses leaves once more  
Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,  
    If earth Death's scroll must be !  
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy  
    Which dawns upon the free :  
Although a subtler Sphinx renew  
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,  
    And to remoter time  
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,  
    The splendour of its prime ;  
And leave, if nought so bright may live,  
All earth can take or Heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose  
    Shall burst, more bright and good  
Than all who fell, than One who rose,  
    Than many unsubdued :  
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,  
But votive tears and symbol flowers.

Oh, cease! must hate and death return?

Cease! must men kill and die?

Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn

Of bitter prophecy.

The world is weary of the past,

Oh, might it die or rest at last!

SHELLEY.

From the Night of Forebeing      ∪      ∪      ∪

AN ODE AFTER EASTER.

“In the chaos of preordination, and night of our fore beings.”—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

“Et lux in tenebris erat, et tenebræ eam non comprehenderunt.”—ST. JOHN.

CAST wide the folding doorways of the East,  
For now is light increased!

And the wind-besomed chambers of the air,

See they be garnished fair;

And look the ways exhale some precious odours,

And set ye all about wild-breathing spice,

Most fit for Paradise.

Now is no time for sober gravity,

Season enough has Nature to be wise

But now discinct, with raiment glittering free,  
Shake she the ringing rafters of the skies  
With festal footing and bold joyance sweet,  
And let the earth be drunken and carouse !  
For lo, into her house  
Spring is come home with her world-wandering  
feet,  
And all things are made young with young  
desires ;  
And all for her is light increased  
In yellow stars and yellow daffodils,  
And East to West, and West to East,  
Fling answering welcome-fires,  
By dawn and day-fall, on the jocund hills.  
And ye, winged minstrels of her fair meinie,  
Being newly coated in glad livery,  
Upon her steps attend,  
And round her treading dance and without end  
Reel your shrill lutany.  
What popular breath her coming does out-tell  
The garrulous leaves among !  
What little noises stir and pass  
From blade to blade along the voluble grass !  
O Nature, never-done  
Ungaped-at Pentecostal miracle,  
We hear thee, each man in his proper tongue !  
Break, elemental children, break ye loose

From the strict frosty rule  
Of grey-beard Winter's school.  
Vault, O young winds, vault in your tricksome  
courses

Upon the snowy steeds that reinless use  
In cœrule pampas of the heaven to run ;  
Foaled of the white sea-horses,  
Washed in the lambent waters of the sun.  
Let even the slug-a-bed snail upon the thorn  
Put forth a conscious horn !  
Mine elemental co-mates, joy each one ;  
And ah, my foster-brethren, seem not sad—  
No, seem not sad,  
That my strange heart and I should be so little  
glad.

Suffer me at your leafy feast  
To sit apart, a somewhat alien guest,  
And watch your mirth,  
Unsharing in the liberal laugh of earth ;  
Yet with a sympathy,  
Begot of wholly sad and half-sweet memory—  
The little sweetness making grief complete ;  
Faint wind of wings from hours that distant  
beat,  
When I, I too,  
Was once, O wild companions, as are you,  
Ran with such wilful feet,

Wraith of a recent day and dead,  
Risen wanly overhead,  
Frail, strengthless as a noon-belated moon,  
Or as the glazing eyes of watery heaven,  
When the sick night sinks into deathly swoon.

A higher and a solemn voice  
I heard through your gay-hearted noise ;  
A solemn meaning and a stiller voice  
Sounds to me from far days when I too shall  
    rejoice,  
Nor more be with your jollity at strife.  
O prophecy  
Of things that are, and are not, and shall be !  
The great-vanned Angel March  
Hath trumpeted  
His clangorous "Sleep no more" to all the  
    dead—  
Beat his strong vans o'er earth, and air, and  
    sea.  
And they have heard ;  
Hark to the *Jubilate* of the bird  
For them that found the dying way to life !  
And they have heard,  
And quicken to the great precursive word ;  
Green spray showers lightly down the cascade of  
    the larch ;



The graves are riven,  
And the Sun comes with power amid the clouds  
of heaven !

Before his way  
Went forth the trumpet of the March ;  
Before his way, before his way  
Dances the pennon of the May !  
O Earth, unchilded, widowed Earth, so long  
Lifting in patient pine and ivy-tree  
Mournful belief and steadfast prophecy,  
Behold how all things are made true !  
Behold your bridegroom cometh in to you,  
Exceeding glad and strong.  
Raise up your eyes, O raise your eyes abroad !  
No more shall you sit sole and vidual,  
Searching, in servile pall,  
Upon the hieratic night the star-sealed sense of  
all :

Rejoice, O barren, and look forth abroad !  
Your children gathered back to your embrace  
See with a mother's face.  
Look up, O mortals, and the portent heed ;  
In very deed,  
Washed with new fire to their irradiant birth,  
Reintegrated are the heavens and earth !  
From sky to sod,  
The world's unfolded blossom smells of God.

O imagery  
Of that which was the first, and is the last !  
For as the dark, profound nativity,  
God saw the end should be,  
When the world's infant horoscope He cast.  
Unshackled from the bright Phœbean awe,  
In leaf, flower, mould, and tree,  
Resolved into dividual liberty,  
Most strengthless, unparticipant, inane,  
Or suffered the ill peace of lethargy,  
Lo, the Earth eased of rule,  
Unsummered, granted to her own worst smart  
The dear wish of the fool—  
Disintegration, merely which man's heart  
For freedom understands,  
Amid the frog-like errors from the damp  
And quaking swamp  
Of the low popular levels spawned in all the lands.  
But thou, O Earth, dost much disdain  
The bondage of thy waste and futile reign,  
And sweetly to the great compulsion draw  
Of God's alone true-manumitting law,  
And Freedom, only which the wise intend,  
To work thine innate end.  
Over thy vacant counterfeit of death  
Broods with soft urgent breath  
Love, that is child of Beauty and of Awe :

To intercleavage of sharp warring pain,  
As of contending chaos come again,  
Thou wak'st, O Earth,  
And work'st from change to change and birth to  
birth

Creation old as hope, and new as sight ;  
For meed of toil not vain,  
Hearing once more the primal fiat toll :—  
“ Let there be light ! ”

And there is light !  
Light flagrant, manifest ;  
Light to the zenith, light from pole to pole ;  
Light from the East that waxeth to the West,  
And with its puissant goings-forth  
Encroaches on the South and on the North ;  
And with its great approaches does prevail  
Upon the sullen fastness of the height,  
And summoning its levied power  
Crescent and confident through the crescent hour,  
Goes down with laughters on the subject vale.  
Light flagrant, manifest ;  
Light to the sentient closeness of the breast !  
Light to the secret chambers of the brain !  
And thou up-floatest, warm, and newly bathed,  
Earth, through delicious air,  
And with thine own apparent beauties swathed,  
Wringing the waters from thine arborous hair ;

That all men's hearts, which do behold and see,  
Grow weak with their exceeding much desire,  
And turn to thee on fire,  
Enamoured with their utter wish of thee,  
Anadyomene !  
What vine-outquickening life all creatures sup,  
Feel, for the air within its sapphire cup  
How it does leap, and twinkle headily !  
Feel, for Earth's bosom pants, and heaves her  
    scarfing sea ;  
And round and round in bacchanal rout reel the  
    swift spheres intemperably !

My little-worlded self ! the shadows pass  
In this thy sister-world, as in a glass,  
Of all processions that revolve in thee :  
Not only of cyclic Man  
Thou here discern'st the plan,  
Not only of cyclic Man, but of the cyclic Me.  
Not solely of Mortality's great years  
The reflex just appears,  
But thine own bosom's year, still circling round  
In ample and in ampler gyre  
Toward the far completion, wherewith crowned,  
Love unconsumed shall chant in his own furnace-  
    fire.  
How many trampled and deciduous joys

Enrich thy soul for joys deciduous still,  
Before the distance shall fulfil  
Cyclic unrest with solemn equipoise !  
Happiness is the shadow of things past,  
Which fools still take for that which is to be !  
And not all foolishly :  
For all the past, read true, is prophecy,  
And all the firsts are hauntings of some Last,  
And all the springs are flash-lights of one  
Spring.

Then leaf, and flower, and fallless fruit  
Shall hang together on the unyellowing bough ;  
And silence shall be Music mute  
For her surchargèd heart. Hush thou !  
These things are far too sure that thou should'st  
dream  
Thereof, lest they appear as things that seem.

Shade within shade ! for deeper in the glass  
Now other imaged meanings pass ;  
And as the man, the poet there is read.  
Winter with me, alack !  
Winter on every hand I find :  
Soul, brain, and pulses dead ;  
The mind no further by the warm sense fed,  
The soul weak-stirring in the arid mind,  
More tearless-weak to flash itself abroad,

Than the earth's life beneath the frost-scorched  
sod.

My lips have drought, and crack,  
By laving music long unvisited.  
Beneath the austere and macerating rime  
Draws back constricted in its icy urns  
The genial flame of Earth, and there  
With torment and with tension does prepare  
The lush disclosures of the vernal time.  
All joys draw inward to their icy urns,  
Tormented by constraining rime,  
And there  
With undelight and throe prepare  
The bounteous efflux of the vernal time.  
Nor less beneath compulsive Law  
Rebukèd draw  
The numbèd musics back upon my heart ;  
Whose yet-triumphant course I know  
And prevalent pulses forth shall start,  
Like cataracts that with thunderous hoof charge  
the disbanding snow.

All power is bound  
In quickening refusal so ;  
And silence is the lair of sound ;  
In act its impulse to deliver,  
With fluctuance and quiver  
The endeavouring thew grows rigid ;

Strong

From its retracted coil strikes the resilient song.

Giver of spring,

And song, and every young new thing !

Thou only seest in me, so stripped and bare,

The lyric secret waiting to be born,

The patient term allowed

Before it stretch and flutteringly unfold

Its rumpled webs of amethyst-freaked, diaphan-  
ous gold.

And what hard task abstracts me from delight,

Filling with hopeless hope and dear despair

The still-born day and parchèd fields of night,

That my old way of song, no longer fair,

For lack of serene care,

Is grown a stony and a weed-choked plot,

Thou only know'st aright,

Thou only know'st, for I know not.

How many songs must die that this may live !

And shall this most rash hope and fugitive,

Fulfilled with beauty and with might

In days whose feet are rumorously on the air,

Make me forget to grieve

For songs which might have been, nor ever were ?

Stern the denial, the travail slow,

'The struggling wall will scantily grow :

And though with that dread rite of sacrifice  
Ordained for during edifice,  
How long, how long ago!  
Into that wall which will not thrive  
I build myself alive.  
Ah, who shall tell me, will the wall uprise?  
Thou wilt not tell me, who dost only know!  
Yet still in mind I keep,  
He which observes the wind shall hardly sow,  
He which regards the clouds shall hardly reap.  
Thine ancient way! I give,  
Nor wit if I receive;  
Risk all, who all would gain: and blindly. Be  
it so.

“And blindly,” said I?—No!  
That saying I unsay: the wings  
Hear I not in prævenient winnowings  
Of coming songs, that lift my hair and stir it?  
What winds with music wet do the sweet storm  
foreshow!  
Utter stagnation  
Is the solstitial slumber of the spirit,  
The blear and blank negation of all life:  
But these sharp questionings mean strife, and  
strife  
Is the negation of negation.



The thing from which I turn my troubled look,  
Fearing the gods' rebuke ;  
That perturbation putting glory on,  
As is the golden vortex in the West  
Over the foundered sun ;  
That—but low breathe it, lest the Nemesis  
Unchild me, vaunting this—  
Is bliss, the hid, hugged, swaddled bliss !  
O youngling Joy carest !  
That on my now first-mothered breast  
Pliest the strange wonder of thine infant lip,  
What this aghast surprise of keenest panging,  
Wherefrom I blench, and cry thy soft mouth rest ?  
Ah hold, withhold, and let the sweet mouth  
    slip !  
So, with such pain, recoils the woolly dam,  
Unused, affrighted, from her yeanling lamb :  
I, one with her in cruel fellowship,  
Marvel what unmaternal thing I am.

Nature, enough ! within thy glass  
Too many and too stern the shadows pass.  
In this delighted season, flaming  
For thy resurrection-feast,  
Ah, more I think the long ensepulture cold,  
Than stony winter rolled  
From the unsealed mouth of the holy East ;

The snowdrop's saintly stoles less heed  
Than the snow-cloistered penance of the seed.  
'Tis the weak flesh reclaiming  
Against the ordinance  
Which yet for just the accepting spirit scans.  
Earth waits, and patient heaven,  
Self-bonded God doth wait  
Thrice-promulgated bans  
Of his fair nuptial-date.  
And power is man's,  
With that great word of "wait,"  
To still the sea of tears,  
And shake the iron heart of Fate.  
In that one word is strong  
An else, alas, much-mortal song ;  
With sight to pass the frontier of all spheres,  
And voice which does my sight such wrong.

Not without fortitude I wait  
The dark majestic ensuit  
Of destiny, nor peevish rate  
Calm-knowledged Fate.  
I, that no part have in the time's bragged way  
And its loud bruit ;  
I, in this house so rifted, marred,  
So ill to live in, hard to leave ;  
I, so star-weary, over-warred,

That have no joy in this your day—  
Rather foul fume englutting, that of day  
Confounds all ray—  
But only stand aside and grieve ;  
I yet have sight beyond the smoke,  
And kiss the gods' feet, though they wreak  
Upon me stroke and again stroke ;  
And this my seeing is not weak.  
The Woman I behold, whose vision seek  
All eyes and know not ; t'ward whom climb  
The steps o' the world, and beats all wing of  
rhyme,  
And knows not ; 'twixt the sun and moon  
Her inexpressible front enstarred  
Tempers the wrangling spheres to tune ;  
Their divergent harmonies  
Concluded in the concord of her eyes,  
And vestal dances of her glad regard.  
I see, which fretteth with surmise  
Much heads grown unsagacious-grey,  
The slow aim of wise-hearted Time,  
Which folded cycles within cycles cloak :  
We pass, we pass, we pass ; this does not pass  
away,  
But holds the furrowing earth still harnessed to  
its yoke.  
The stars still write their golden purposes

On heaven's high palimpsest, and no man sees,  
Nor any therein Daniel ; I do hear  
From the revolving year  
A voice which cries :  
" All dies ;  
Lo, how all dies ! O seer,  
And all things too arise :  
All dies, and all is born ;  
But each resurgent morn, behold, more near the  
Perfect Morn."

Firm is the man, and set beyond the cast  
Of Fortune's game, and the iniquitous hour,  
Whose falcon soul sits fast,  
And not intends her high sagacious tour  
Or ere the quarry sighted ; who looks past  
To slow much sweet from little instant sour,  
And in the first does always see the last.

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

BOOK III  
THE LOVER



Eve in Eden



“ SWEET is the breath of Morn, her rising sweet,  
With charm of earliest birds ; pleasant the  
sun,

When first on this delightful land he spreads  
His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and  
flower,

Glist’ring with dew ; fragrant the fertile earth  
After soft showers ; and sweet the coming on  
Of grateful evening mild : then silent night,  
With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,  
And these the gems of heav’n, her starry train :  
But neither breath of Morn when she ascends  
With charm of earliest birds, nor rising sun  
On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, flower,  
Glist’ring with dew, nor fragrance after showers,  
Nor grateful evening mild, nor silent night,  
With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,  
Or glittering starlight, without thee is sweet.

But wherefore all night long shine these? for  
whom

This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?"

To whom our general ancestor replied :

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth  
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep :  
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold  
Both day and night : how often from the steep  
Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard  
Celestial voices to the midnight air,  
Sole, or responsive each to other's note,  
Singing their great Creator? oft in bands  
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,  
With heav'nly touch of instrumental sounds  
In full harmonic number joined, their songs  
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to heaven."

Thus talking, hand in hand alone they passed  
On to their blissful bower ; it was a place  
Chosen by the sov'reign planter, when He framed  
All things to man's delightful use : the roof  
Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,  
Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew  
Of firm and fragrant leaf ; on either side  
Acanthus and each odorous bushy shrub  
Fenced up the verdant wall, each beauteous  
flower,

Iris all hues, roses, and jessamine,



Reared high their flourished heads between, and  
wrought

Mosaic ; under foot the violet,  
Crocus, and hyacinth with rich inlay  
Broidered the ground, more coloured than with  
stone

Of costliest emblem : other creature here,  
Beast, bird, insect, or worm, durst enter none ;  
Such was their awe of man. In shadier bower  
More sacred and sequestered, though but feigned,  
Pan or Sylvanus never slept ; nor nymph  
Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess,  
With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,  
Espousèd Eve decked first her nuptial bed,  
And heav'nly choirs the Hymenæan sung,  
What day the genial angel to our sire  
Brought her in naked beauty more adorned,  
More lovely than Pandora, whom the Gods  
Endowed with all their gifts ; and O, too like  
In sad event, when to the unwiser son  
Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared  
Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged  
On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.

Thus, at their shady lodge arrived, both stood,  
Both turned, and under open sky adored  
The God that made both sky, air, earth, and heav'n  
Which they beheld, the moon's resplendent globe,

And starry pole. "Thou also mad'st the night,  
Maker Omnipotent, and thou the day,  
Which we, in our appointed work employed,  
Have finished, happy in our mutual help  
And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss  
Ordained by thee, and this delicious place  
For us too large, where thy abundance wants  
Partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground.  
But thou hast promised from us two a race  
To fill the earth, who shall with us extol  
Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,  
And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep."

MILTON.

A Song



G O, lovely Rose!  
Tell her, that wastes her time  
and me,

That now she knows,  
When I resemble her to thee,  
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young  
And shuns to have her graces spied,  
That hadst thou sprung  
In deserts, where no men abide,  
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth  
Of beauty from the light retired :  
    Bid her come forth,  
Suffer herself to be desired,  
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die ! that she  
The common fate of all things rare  
    May read in thee :  
How small a part of time they share  
That are so wondrous sweet and fair !

WALLER.

A Pæan of Love    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

“ DOUBT you to whom my Muse these notes  
    intendeth ;  
Which now my breast o’ercharged to music  
    lendeth ?

To you ! to you ! all song of praise is due :  
Only in you my song begins and endeth.

“ Who hath the eyes which marry state with  
    pleasure,

Who keeps the keys of Nature’s chiefest treasure ?

To you ! to you ! all song of praise is due :  
Only for you the heaven forgot all measure.

“Who hath the lips, where wit in fairness  
reigneth?

Who womankind at once both decks and staineth?

To you! to you! all song of praise is due:  
Only by you Cupid his crown maintaineth.

“Who hath the feet, whose steps all sweetness  
planteth?

Who else; for whom Fame worthy trumpets  
wanteth?

To you! to you! all song of praise is due:  
Only to you her sceptre Venus granteth.

“Who hath the breast, whose milk doth passions  
nourish?

Whose grace is such, that when it chides doth  
cherish?

To you! to you! all song of praise is due:  
Only through you the tree of life doth flourish.

“Who hath the hand, which without stroke  
subdueth?

Who long dead beauty with increase reneweth?

To you! to you! all song of praise is due:  
Only at you all envy hopeless rueth.

“Who hath the hair, which loosest fastest tieth?  
Who makes a man live then glad when he dieth?  
To you! to you! all song of praise is due:  
Only of you the flatterer never lieth.

“Who hath the voice, which soul from senses  
sunders?  
Whose force but yours the bolts of beauty  
thunders?  
To you! to you! all song of praise is due:  
Only with you not miracles are wonders.

“Doubt you to whom my Muse these notes  
intendeth?  
Which now my breast o’ercharged to music  
lendeth?  
To you! to you! all song of praise is due:  
Only in you my song begins and endeth.”

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

Ask me no more    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

ASK me no more where Jove bestows,  
When June is past, the fading rose;  
For in your beauties’ orient deep  
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more, whither do stray  
The golden atoms of the day ;  
For in pure love Heaven did prepare  
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more, whither doth haste  
The nightingale, when May is past ;  
For in your sweet dividing throat  
She winters and keeps warm her note.

Ask me no more, where those stars light,  
That downwards fall in dead of night ;  
For in your eyes they sit, and there  
Fixèd become, as in their sphere.

Ask me no more, if East or West  
The phœnix builds her spicy nest ;  
For unto you at last she flies,  
And in your fragrant bosom dies.

CAREW.

A Song



GO not, happy day,  
From the shining fields,  
Go not, happy day,  
Till the maiden yields.

Rosy is the West,  
    Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
    And a rose her mouth.  
When the happy Yes  
    Falters from her lips,  
Pass and blush the news  
    Over glowing ships ;  
Over blowing seas,  
    Over seas at rest,  
Pass the happy news,  
    Blush it thro' the West ;  
Till the red man dance,  
    By his red cedar-tree,  
And the red man's babe  
    Leap, beyond the sea.  
Blush from West to East,  
    Blush from East to West,  
Till the West is East,  
    Blush it thro' the West.  
Rosy is the West,  
    Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
    And a rose her mouth.

TENNYSON.

COME live with me and be my Love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove  
That hills and valleys, dale and field,  
And all the craggy mountains yield.

There will we sit upon the rocks  
And see the shepherds feed their flocks,  
By shallow rivers, to whose falls  
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee beds of roses  
And a thousand fragrant posies,  
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle  
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle.

A gown made of the finest wool,  
Which from our pretty lambs we pull,  
Fair lined slippers for the cold,  
With buckles of the purest gold.

A belt of straw and ivy-buds  
With coral clasps and amber studs :  
And if these pleasures may thee move,  
Come live with me and be my Love.



Thy silver dishes for thy meat  
As precious as the gods do eat,  
Shall on an ivory table be  
Prepared each day for thee and me.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing  
For thy delight each May morning :  
If these delights thy mind may move,  
Then live with me and be my Love.

MARLOWE.

A Cedar of Lebanon



I.

I HAVE led her home, my love, my only friend.  
There is none like her, none.  
And never yet so warmly ran my blood  
And sweetly, on and on  
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,  
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

II.

None like her, none.  
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk  
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,  
And shook my heart to think she comes once more ;

But even then I heard her close the door,  
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

III.

There is none like her, none.  
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.  
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon  
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious  
    East,  
Sighing for Lebanon,  
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,  
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
And looking to the South, and fed  
With honey'd rain and delicate air,  
And haunted by the starry head  
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,  
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame ;  
And over whom thy darkness must have spread  
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great  
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there  
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom she  
    came.

IV.

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,  
And you fair stars that crown a happy day  
Go in and out as if at merry play,

Who am no more so all forlorn,  
As when it seem'd far better to be born  
To labour and the mattock-harden'd hand,  
'Than nursed at ease and brought to understand  
A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,  
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand  
His nothingness into man.

V.

But now shine on, and what care I,  
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl  
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,  
And do accept my madness, and would die  
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

VI.

Would die ; for sullen-seeming Death may give  
More life to Love than is or ever was  
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.  
Let no one ask me how it came to pass ;  
It seems that I am happy, that to me  
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,  
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

Not die ; but live a life of truest breath,  
 And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.  
 O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,  
 Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death ?  
 Make answer, Maud my bliss,  
 Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,  
 Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this ?  
 "The dusky strand of Death inwoven here  
 With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more  
 dear."

TENNYSON.

Song



O MISTRESS mine, where are you roaming ?  
 O, stay and hear, your true love's coming  
 That can sing both high and low :  
 Trip no further, pretty sweetening !  
 Journeys end in lovers meeting  
 Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love ? 'Tis not hereafter :  
 Present mirth hath present laughter,  
 What's to come is still unsure.

In delay there lies no plenty,  
Then come, kiss me, sweet and twenty,  
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

SHAKESPEARE.

Song



**M**OVE eastward, happy earth, and leave  
Yon orange sunset waning slow :  
From fringes of the faded eve,  
O, happy planet, eastward go ;  
Till over thy dark shoulder glow  
Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
To glass herself in dewy eyes  
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,  
Dip forward under starry light,  
And move me to my marriage-morn,  
And round again to happy night.

TENNYSON.

Lorenzo and Jessica



*Lor.* **T**HE moon shines bright : in such a night  
as this,

When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees  
And they did make no noise, in such a night

Troilus methinks mounted the Trojan walls  
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents,  
Where Cressid lay that night.

*Jess.* In such a night  
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew  
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself  
And ran dismayed away.

*Lor.* In such a night  
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand  
Upon the wild sea-banks and waft her love  
To come again to Carthage.

*Jess.* In such a night  
Medea gathered the enchanted herbs  
That did renew old Æson.

*Lor.* In such a night  
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew :  
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice  
As far as Belmont.

*Jess.* In such a night  
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,  
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith  
And ne'er a true one.

*Lor.* In such a night  
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,  
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

. . . . .

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank !  
Here we will sit and let the sounds of music  
Creep in our ears : soft stillness and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.  
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold :  
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins ;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls ;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

SHAKESPEARE (*The Merchant of Venice*).

Under the Stars                    

**I**S that enchanted moan only the swell  
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay ?  
And hark the clock within, the silver knell  
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,  
And died to live, long as my pulses play ;  
But now by this my love has closed her sight  
And given false death her hand, and stol'n away  
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell  
Among the fragments of the golden day.  
May nothing there her maiden grace affright !

Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.  
My bride to be, my evermore delight,  
My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell ;  
It is but for a little space I go :  
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell  
Beat to the noiseless music of the night !  
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow  
Of your soft splendours that you look so bright ?  
I have climbed nearer out of lonely Hell.  
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,  
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,  
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe  
That seems to draw—but it shall not be so :  
Let all be well, be well.

TENNYSON.

To Night    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

SWIFTLY walk over the western wave,  
Spirit of Night !  
Out of the misty eastern cave,  
Where, all the long and lone daylight,  
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,  
Which make thee terrible and dear,—  
Swift be thy flight !



Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,  
Star-inwrought ;  
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day ;  
Kiss her until she be wearied out,  
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,  
Touching all with thine opiate wand—  
Come, long-sought !

When I arose and saw the dawn,  
I sighed for thee ;  
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,  
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,  
And the weary Day turned to his rest,  
Lingering like an unloved guest,  
I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,  
Wouldst thou me ?  
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,  
Murmured like a noontide bee,  
Shall I nestle near thy side ?  
Wouldst thou me ?—And I replied,  
No, not thee !

Death will come when thou art dead,  
Soon, too soon—  
Sleep will come when thou art fled ;

Of neither would I ask the boon  
I ask of thee, belovèd Night—  
Swift be thine approaching flight,  
Come soon, soon !

SHELLEY.

The Departure



I.

AND on her lover's arm she leant,  
And round her waist she felt it fold,  
And far across the hills they went  
In that new world which is the old :  
Across the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
And deep into the dying day  
The happy princess followed him.

II.

"I'd sleep another hundred years,  
O love, for such another kiss" ;  
"O wake for ever, love," she hears,  
"O love, 'twas such as this and this."  
And o'er them many a sliding star,  
And many a merry wind was borne,  
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,  
The twilight melted into morn.

III.

“ O eyes long laid in happy sleep ! ”

“ O happy sleep, that lightly fled ! ”

“ O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep ! ”

“ O love, thy kiss would wake the dead ! ”

And o’er them many a flowing range

Of vapour buoy’d the crescent-bark,

And, rapt thro’ many a rosy change,

The twilight died into the dark.

IV.

“ A hundred summers ! can it be ?

And whither goest thou, tell me where ? ”

“ O seek my father’s court with me,

For there are greater wonders there.”

And o’er the hills, and far away

Beyond their utmost purple rim,

Beyond the night, across the day,

Thro’ all the world she follow’d him.

TENNYSON (*from* “ The Day-Dream ”).

She was a Phantom of Delight    ♪    ♪    ♪

SHE was a Phantom of delight  
 When first she gleamed upon my sight ;  
 A lovely apparition, sent  
 To be a moment’s ornament ;

Her eyes as stars of twilight fair ;  
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair ;  
But all things else about her drawn  
From May-time and the cheerful dawn ;  
A dancing shape, an image gay,  
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,  
A spirit, yet a woman too !  
Her household motions light and free,  
And steps of virgin liberty ;  
A countenance in which did meet  
Sweet records, promises as sweet ;  
A creature not too bright or good  
For human nature's daily food ;  
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,  
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene  
The very pulse of the machine ;  
A being breathing thoughtful breath,  
A traveller betwixt life and death ;  
The reason firm, the temperate will,  
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill,  
A perfect woman, nobly planned,  
To warn, to comfort, and command ;

And yet a spirit still, and bright  
With something of an angel-light.

WORDSWORTH.

The Lady of the Lambs    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

SHE walks—the lady of my delight—  
A shepherdess of sheep.  
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them  
white ;

She guards them from the steep.  
She feeds them on the fragrant height,  
And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,  
Dark valleys safe and deep.  
Into that tender breast at night  
The chastest stars may peep.  
She walks—the lady of my delight—  
A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,  
Though gay they run and leap.  
She is so circumspect and right ;  
She has her soul to keep.  
She walks—the lady of my delight—  
A shepherdess of sheep.

ALICE MEYNELL.

SHALL I compare thee to a summer's day ?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate :  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date :  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed ;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course un-  
trimmed ;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest ;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st :  
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

SHAKESPEARE.

Andrea Del Sarto                    

Called the “ Faultless Painter.”

BUT do not let us quarrel any more,  
No, my Lucrezia ; bear with me for once :  
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.  
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart ?  
I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,  
Treat his own subject after his own way,

Fix his own time, accept too his own price,  
And shut the money into this small hand  
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?  
Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love!  
I often am much wearier than you think,  
This evening more than usual, and it seems  
As if—forgive now—should you let me sit  
Here by the window with your hand in mine  
And look a half hour forth on Fiesole,  
Both of one mind, as married people use,  
Quietly, quietly, the evening through,  
I might get up to-morrow to my work  
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.  
To-morrow how you shall be glad for this!  
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,  
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.  
Don't count the time lost, either; you must serve  
For each of the five pictures we require—  
It saves a model. So! keep looking so—  
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds:  
—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,  
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—  
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,  
Which everybody looks on and calls his,  
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,  
While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less!  
You smile? why, there's my picture ready made.

There's what we painters call our harmony !  
A common greyness silvers everything,—  
All in a twilight, you and I alike  
—You, at the point of your first pride in me  
(That's gone you know),—but I, at every point ;  
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down  
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.  
There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top ;  
That length of convent-wall across the way  
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside ;  
The last monk leaves the garden ; days decrease  
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.  
Eh ? the whole seems to fall into a shape  
As if I saw alike my work and self  
And all that I was born to be and do,  
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.  
How strange now, looks the life He makes us lead !  
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are :  
I feel He laid the fetter : let it lie !  
This chamber for example—turn your head—  
All that's behind us ! you don't understand  
Nor care to understand about my art,  
But you can hear at least when people speak ;  
And that cartoon, the second from the door  
—It is the thing, Love ! so such things should be—  
Behold Madonna, I am bold to say.  
I can do with my pencil what I know,



What I see, what at bottom of my heart  
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—  
Do easily, too—when I say perfectly  
I do not boast, perhaps : yourself are judge  
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,  
And just as much they used to say in France.  
At any rate 'tis easy, all of it,  
No sketches first, no studies, that's long past—  
I do what many dream of all their lives  
—Dream? strive to do, and agonise to do,  
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such  
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,  
Who strive—you don't know how the others strive  
To paint a little thing like that you smeared  
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,  
Yet do much less, so much less, some one says,  
(I know his name, no matter) so much less!  
Well, less is more, Lucrezia! I am judged.  
There burns a truer light of God in them,  
In their vexed, beating, stuffed and stopped-up  
    brain,  
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt  
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of  
    mine.  
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I  
    know,  
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,

Enter and take their place there sure enough,  
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.  
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.  
The sudden blood of these men ! at a word—  
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.  
I, painting from myself and to myself,  
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame  
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks  
Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,  
His hue mistaken—what of that ? or else,  
Rightly traced and well ordered—what of that ?  
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,  
Or what's a Heaven for ? all is silver-grey  
Placid and perfect with my art—the worse !  
I know both what I want and what might gain—  
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh  
“ Had I been two, another and myself,  
Our head would have o'erlooked the world ! ” No  
doubt.

Yonder's a work, now, of that famous youth  
The Urbinate who died five years ago.  
( 'Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)  
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,  
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,  
Reaching, that Heaven might so replenish him,  
Above and through his art—for it gives way ;  
That arm is wrongly put—and there again—

A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,  
Its body, so to speak! its soul is right,  
He means right—that, a child may understand.  
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it.  
But all the play, the insight and the stretch—  
Out of me! out of me! And wherefore out?  
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,  
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you.  
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—  
More than I merit, yes, by many times.  
But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,  
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,  
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird  
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—  
Had you, with these the same, but brought a  
mind!

Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged  
“God and the glory! never care for gain.  
The present by the future, what is that?  
Live for fame, side by side with Angelo—  
Rafael is waiting. Up to God all three!”  
I might have done it for you. So it seems—  
Perhaps not. All is as God over-rules.  
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;  
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?  
What wife had Rafael, or has Angelo?  
In this world, who can do a thing, will not—

And who would do it, cannot, I perceive :  
Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the  
power—

And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,  
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.  
'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,  
That I am something underrated here,  
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.  
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,  
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.  
The best is when they pass and look aside ;  
But they speak sometimes ; I must bear it all.  
Well may they speak ! That Francis, that first  
time,

And that long festal year at Fontainebleau !  
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,  
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,  
In that humane great monarch's golden look,—  
One finger in his beard or twisted curl  
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,  
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,  
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,  
I painting proudly with his breath on me,  
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,  
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls  
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—  
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,

This in the background, waiting on my work,  
To crown the issue with a last reward !  
A good time, was it not, my kingly days ?  
And had you not grown restless—but I know—  
'Tis done and past ; 'twas right, my instinct said ;  
Too live the life grew, golden and not grey—  
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt  
Out of the grange whose four walls make his  
world.

How could it end in any other way ?  
You called me, and I came home to your heart.  
The triumph was to have ended there—then if  
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost ?  
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,  
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine !  
“ Rafael did this, Andrea painted that—  
The Roman's is the better when you pray,  
But still the other's Virgin was his wife—”  
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge  
Both pictures in your presence ; clearer grows  
My better fortune, I resolve to think.  
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,  
Said one day Angelo, his very self,  
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . .  
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts  
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,  
Too lifted up in heart because of it)

“ Friend, there’s a certain sorry little scrub  
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,  
Who, were he set to plan and execute  
As you are pricked on by your popes and kings,  
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours ! ”  
To Rafael’s !—And indeed the arm is wrong.  
I hardly dare—yet, only you to see,  
Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should  
go !

Ay, but the soul ! he’s Rafael ! rub it out !  
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,  
(What he ? why, who but Michael Angelo ?  
Do you forget already words like those ?)  
If really there was such a chance, so lost,  
Is, whether you’re—not grateful—but more  
pleased.

Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed !  
This hour has been an hour ! Another smile ?  
If you would sit thus by me every night  
I should work better, do you comprehend ?  
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.  
See, it is settled dusk now ; there’s a star ;  
Morello’s gone, the watch-lights show the wall,  
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.  
Come from the window, Love,—come in, at last,  
Inside the melancholy little house  
We built to be so gay with. God is just.

King Francis may forgive me. Oft at nights  
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,  
The walls become illumined, brick from brick  
Distinct, instead of mortar fierce bright gold,  
That gold of his I did cement them with!  
Let us but love each other. Must you go?  
That Cousin here again? he waits outside?  
Must see you—you, and not with me? Those  
loans!

More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?  
Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?  
While hand and eye and something of a heart  
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?  
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit  
The grey remainder of the evening out,  
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly  
How I could paint were I but back in France,  
One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face,  
Not yours this time! I want you at my side  
To hear them—that is, Michael Angelo—  
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.  
Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.  
I take the subjects for his corridor,  
Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,  
And throw him in another thing or two  
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough  
To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,

What's better and what's all I care about,  
Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff.  
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does  
he,  
The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.  
I regret little, I would change still less.  
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?  
The very wrong to Francis! it is true  
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,  
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.  
My father and my mother died of want.  
Well, had I riches of my own? you see  
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.  
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they  
died:

And I have laboured somewhat in my time  
And not been paid profusely. Some good son  
Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!  
No doubt, there's something strikes a balance.

Yes,  
You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.  
This must suffice me here. What would one have?  
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more  
chance—

Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,



Meted on each side by the angel's reed,  
For Leonard, Rafael, Angelo and me  
To cover—the three first without a wife,  
While I have mine! So—still they overcome  
Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

ROBERT BROWNING.

“O that 'twere possible”



I.

O THAT 'twere possible  
After long grief and pain  
To find the arms of my true love  
Round me once again!

II.

When I was wont to meet her  
In the silent woody places  
By the home that gave me birth,  
We stood tranced in long embraces  
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter  
Than anything on earth.

III.

A shadow flits before me,  
Not thou, but like to thee:

Ah Christ, that it were possible  
For one short hour to see  
The souls we loved, that they might  
    tell us  
What and where they be.

IV.

It leads me forth at evening,  
It lightly winds and steals  
In a cold white robe before me,  
When all my spirit reels  
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,  
And the roaring of the wheels.

V.

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
Half in dreams I sorrow after  
The delight of early skies ;  
In a wakeful doze I sorrow  
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
For the meeting of the morrow,  
The delight of happy laughter,  
The delight of low replies.

VI.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet  
And a dewy splendour falls

On the little flower that clings  
To the turrets and the walls ;  
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And the light and shadow fleet ;  
She is walking in the meadow,  
And the woodland echo rings ;  
In a moment we shall meet ;  
She is singing in the meadow  
And the rivulet at her feet  
Ripples on in light and shadow  
To the ballad that she sings.

VII.

Do I hear her sing as of old,  
My bird with the shining head,  
My own dove with the tender eye ?  
But there rings on a sudden a passionate  
cry,  
There is some one dying or dead,  
And a sullen thunder is rolled ;  
For a tumult shakes the city,  
And I wake, my dream is fled ;  
In the shuddering dawn, behold,  
Without knowledge, without pity,  
By the curtains of my bed  
That abiding phantom cold.

VIII.

Get thee hence, nor come again,  
 Mix not memory with doubt,  
 Pass, thou death-like type of pain,  
 Pass and cease to move about !  
 'Tis the blot upon the brain  
 That *will* show itself without.

IX.

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,  
 And the yellow vapours choke  
 The great city sounding wide ;  
 The day comes, a dull red ball  
 Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke  
 On the misty river-tide.

X.

Thro' the hubbub of the market  
 I steal, a wasted frame,  
 It crosses here, it crosses there,  
 Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,  
 The shadow still the same ;  
 And on my heavy eyelids  
 My anguish hangs like shame.

XI.

Also for her that met me  
 That heard me softly call,

Came glimmering thro' the laurels  
At the quiet evenfall,  
In the garden by the turrets  
Of the old manorial hall.

XII.

Would the happy spirit descend  
From the realms of light and song,  
In the chamber or the street,  
As she looks among the blest,  
Should I fear to greet my friend  
Or to say, "Forgive the wrong,"  
Or to ask her, "Take me, sweet,  
To the regions of thy rest?"

XIII.

But the broad light glares and beats  
And the shadow flits and fleets  
And will not let me be ;  
And I loathe the squares and streets,  
And the faces that one meets,  
Hearts with no love for me :  
Always I long to creep  
Into some still cavern deep,  
There to weep, and weep, and weep  
My whole soul out to thee.

TENNYSON.

“ **L**IVE in these conquering leaves: live all  
the same ;

And walk through all tongues one triumphant  
flame ;

Live here, great heart ; and love, and die, and  
kill ;

And bleed, and wound, and yield, and conquer  
still.

Let this immortal life where'er it comes

Walk in a crowd of loves and martyrdoms.

Let mystic deaths wait on't ; and wise souls be

The love-slain witnesses of this life of thee.

O sweet incendiary ! show here thy art,

Upon this carcase of a hard cold heart ;

Let all thy scatter'd shafts of light, that play

Among the leaves of thy large books of day,

Combin'd against this breast at once break in,

And take away from me myself and sin ;

This gracious robbery shall thy bounty be

And my best fortunes such fair spoils of me.

O thou undaunted daughter of desires !

By all thy pow'r of lights and fires ;

By all the eagle in thee, all the dove ;

By all thy lives and deaths of love ;

By thy large draughts of intellectual day ;

And by thy thirsts of love more large than they ;  
By all thy brim-fill'd bowls of fierce desire ;  
By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire ;  
By the full kingdom of that final kiss  
That seized thy parting soul, and seal'd thee his ;  
By all the heavens thou hast in him,  
(Fair sister of the seraphim)  
By all of him we have in thee ;  
Leave nothing of myself in me.  
Let me so read thy life, that I  
Unto all life of mine may die."

CRASHAW.

To ——— ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

I.

ONE word is too often profaned  
For me to profane it,  
One feeling too falsely disdained  
For thee to disdain it ;  
One hope is too like despair  
For prudence to smother,  
And pity from thee more dear  
Than that from another.

II.

I can give not what men call love,  
 But wilt thou accept not  
 The worship the heart lifts above  
 And the Heavens reject not,—  
 The desire of the moth for the star,  
 Of the night for the morrow,  
 The devotion to something afar  
 From the sphere of our sorrow?

SHELLEY.

To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars



TELL me not, Sweet, I am unkind  
 That from the nunnery  
 Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind,  
 To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,  
 The first foe in the field ;  
 And with a stronger faith embrace  
 A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such  
 As you too shall adore ;  
 I could not love thee, Dear, so much,  
 Loved I not Honour more.

LOVELACE.



PÆSTUM ! thy roses long ago,  
All roses far above,  
Twice in the year were call'd to blow  
And braid the locks of Love.

He saw the city sink in dust,  
It's roses' roots decay'd,  
And cried in sorrow, " Find I must  
Another for my braid."

First Cyprus, then the Syrian shore  
To Pharpar's lucid rill,  
Did those two large dark eyes explore,  
But wanted something still.

Damascus filled his heart with joy,  
So sweet her roses were !  
He cull'd them ; but the wayward boy  
Thought them ill worth his care.

" I want them every month," he cried,  
" I want them every hour ;  
Perennial rose, and none beside,  
Henceforth shall be my flower."

LANDOR.

Till the Rocks Melt wi' the Sun      ♪      ♪      ♪

O MY Luve's like a red, red rose  
That's newly sprung in June ;  
O my Luve's like the melodie  
That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,  
So deep in luve am I :  
And I will luve thee still, my dear,  
Till a' the seas gang dry :

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun ;  
I will luve thee still, my dear,  
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve !  
And fare thee weel awhile !  
And I will come again, my Luve,  
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

BURNS.

Song      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪

YOU'LL love me yet !—and I can tarry  
Your love's protracted growing.  
June reared that bunch of flowers you carry  
From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartfull now—some seed  
At least is sure to strike  
And yield—what you'll not pluck indeed,  
Not love, but, may be, like!

You'll look at least on love's remains,  
A grave's one violet:  
Your look?—that pays a thousand pains.  
What's death?—You'll love me yet.

ROBERT BROWNING.

Evelyn Hope



I.

BEAUTIFUL Evelyn Hope is dead!  
Sit and watch by her side an hour.  
That is her book-shelf, this her bed;  
She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,  
Beginning to die too, in the glass.  
Little has yet been changed, I think—  
The shutters are shut, no light may pass  
Save two long rays thro' the hinge's chink.

II.

Sixteen years old when she died!  
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name—  
It was not her time to love: beside,  
Her life had many a hope and aim,

Duties enough and little cares,  
And now was quiet, now astir—  
Till God's hand beckoned unawares,  
And the sweet white brow is all of her.

III.

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope?  
What, your soul was pure and true,  
The good stars met in your horoscope,  
Made you of spirit, fire and dew—  
And just because I was thrice as old,  
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,  
Each was nought to each, must I be told?  
We were fellow mortals, nought beside?

IV.

No, indeed! for God above  
Is great to grant, as mighty to make,  
And creates the love to reward the love,—  
I claim you still, for my own love's sake!  
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,  
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few—  
Much is to learn and much to forget  
Ere the time be come for taking you.

V.

But the time will come,—at last it will,  
 When, Evelyn Hope, what meant, I shall say,  
 In the lower earth, in the years long still,  
 That body and soul so pure and gay?  
 Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,  
 And your mouth of your own geranium's red—  
 And what you would do with me, in fine,  
 In the new life come in the old one's stead.

VI.

I have lived, I shall say, so much since then,  
 Given up myself so many times,  
 Gained me the gains of various men,  
 Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;  
 Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope,  
 Either I missed or itself missed me—  
 And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!  
 What is the issue? let us see!

VII.

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while;  
 My heart seemed full as it could hold—  
 There was place and to spare for the frank young  
 smile  
 And the red young mouth and the hair's young  
 gold.

So, hush,—I will give you this leaf to keep—

See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand.

There, that is our secret! go to sleep;

You will wake, and remember, and understand.

ROBERT BROWNING.

Love's Farewell                              

SINCE there's no help, come let us kiss and  
part,—

Nay I have done, you get no more of me;

And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,

That thus so cleanly I myself can free;

Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,

And when we meet at any time again,

Be it not seen in either of our brows

That we one jot of former love retain.

Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath,

When his pulse failing, passion speechless lies,

When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,

And innocence is closing up his eyes,

—Now if thou would'st, when all have given him  
over,

From death to life thou might'st him yet recover!

DRAYTON.

True Love    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

LET me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds  
Or bends with the remover to remove :—  
O no! It is an ever-fixèd mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken ;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height  
be taken.  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and  
cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come ;  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out ev'n to the edge of doom :—  
If this be error, and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

SHAKESPEARE.

Song    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

LOVE that hath us in the net,  
Can he pass, and we forget ?  
Many suns arise and set.

Many a chance the years beget.  
Love the gift is Love the debt.  
Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.  
Love is made a vague regret.  
Eyes with idle tears are wet.  
Idle habit links us yet.  
What is love? for we forget :  
Ah, no ! no !

TENNYSON.

The Bargain



MY true love hath my heart, and I have his,  
By just exchange one for another given :  
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,  
There never was a better bargain driven :  
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one,  
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides :  
He loves my heart, for once it was his own,  
I cherish his because in me it bides :  
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.



The Wife to the Husband    

I.

I THOUGHT once how Theocritus had sung  
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for  
years,  
Who each one in a gracious hand appears  
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young :  
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,  
I saw in gradual vision through my tears,  
The sweet sad years, the melancholy years, . . .  
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung  
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware  
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move  
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair ;  
And a voice said in mastery while I strove, . . .  
“Guess now who holds thee?”—“Death!” I  
said. But there,  
The silver answer rang, . . . “Not Death, but  
Love.”

II.

I never gave a lock of hair away  
To a man, Dearest, except this to thee,  
Which now upon my fingers thoughtfully  
I ring out to the full brown length, and say,  
“Take it.” My day of youth went yesterday ;

My hair no longer bounds to my foot's glee,  
Nor plant I it from rose or myrtle-tree,  
As girls do, any more. It only may  
Now shade on two pale cheeks, the mark of tears,  
Taught drooping from the head that hangs aside  
Through sorrow's trick. I thought the funeral-  
shears

Would take this first ; but Love is justified :  
Take it thou, . . . finding pure, from all those  
years,  
The kiss my mother left here when she died.

### III.

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,  
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,  
Until the lengthening wings break into fire  
At either curvèd point,—what bitter wrong  
Can the earth do us, that we should not long  
Be here contented ? Think. In mounting higher,  
The angels would press on us, and aspire  
To drop some golden orb of perfect song  
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay  
Rather on earth, Beloved,—where the unfit  
Contrarious moods of men recoil away  
And isolate pure spirits, and permit  
A place to stand and love in for a day,  
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

IV.

My letters! all dead paper, . . . mute and  
white!—

And yet they seem alive and quivering  
Against my tremulous hands, which loose the  
string

And let them drop down on my knee to-night.  
This said, . . . he wished to have me in his sight  
Once, as a friend: this fixed a day in spring  
To come and touch my hand . . . a simple thing,  
Yet I wept for it!—this, . . . the paper's light . . .  
Said, *Dear, I love thee*: and I sank and quailed  
As if God's future thundered on my past:  
This said, *I am thine*—and so its ink has paled  
With lying at my heart that beat too fast:  
And this . . . O Love, thy words have ill availed,  
If, what this said, I dared repeat at last!

V.

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange  
And *be* all to me? Shall I never miss  
Home talk and blessing, and the common kiss  
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange  
When I look up to drop on a new range  
Of walls and floors . . . another home than this?  
Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is

Filled by dead eyes, too tender to know change?  
That's hardest! If to conquer love, has tried,  
To conquer grief tries more . . . as all things  
    prove:

For grief indeed is love, and grief beside.

Alas! I have grieved so I am hard to love—  
Yet love me—wilt thou? Open thine heart wide,  
And fold within the wet wings of thy dove.

VI.

First time he kissed me, he but only kissed  
The fingers of this hand wherewith I write,  
And ever since it grew more clean and white, . . .  
Slow to world-greetings . . . quick with its "Oh,  
    list!"

When the angels speak. A ring of amethyst  
I could not wear here plainer to my sight,  
Than that first kiss. The second passed in height  
The first, and sought the forehead, and half  
    missed,

Half falling on the hair. O beyond meed!  
That was the chrism of love, which love's own  
    crown,

With sanctifying sweetness, did precede.  
The third, upon my lips, was folded down  
In perfect, purple state! since when, indeed,  
I have been proud, and said, "My Love, my own."

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
 I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
 My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
 For the ends of Being and Ideal Grace.  
 I love thee to the level of every day's  
 Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.  
 I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;  
 I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise;  
 I love thee with the passion put to use  
 In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith;  
 I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
 With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,  
 Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose  
 I shall but love thee better after death.

E. B. BROWNING.

One Word More



To E. B. B.

I.

THERE they are, my fifty men and women  
 Naming me the fifty poems finished!  
 Take them, Love, the book and me together,  
 Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

Rafael made a century of sonnets,  
 Made and wrote them in a certain volume  
 Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil  
 Else he only used to draw Madonnas :  
 These, the world might view—but one, the  
     volume.

Who that one, you ask? Your heart instructs  
     you.

Did she live and love it all her lifetime?  
 Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,  
 Die, and let it drop beside her pillow  
 Where it lay in place of Rafael's glory,  
 Rafael's cheek so duteous and so loving—  
 Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,  
 Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's?

## III.

You and I would rather read that volume,  
 (Taken to his beating bosom by it)  
 Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael,  
 Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas—  
 Her, San Sisto names, and Her, Foligno,  
 Her, that visits Florence in a vision,  
 Her, that's left with lilies in the Louvre—  
 Seen by us and all the world in circle.

IV.

You and I will never read that volume.  
 Guido Reni, like his own eye's apple  
 Guarded long the treasure-book and loved it.  
 Guido Reni dying, all Bologna  
 Cried, and the world with it, "Ours — the  
     treasure!"

Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

V.

Dante once prepared to paint an angel:  
 Whom to please? You whisper "Beatrice."  
 While he mused and traced it and retraced it,  
 (Peradventure with a pen corroded  
 Still by drops of that hot ink he dipped for,  
 When, his left-hand i' the hair o' the wicked,  
 Back he held the brow and pricked its stigma,  
 Bit into the live man's flesh for parchment,  
 Loosed him, laughed to see the writing rankle,  
 Let the wretch go festering thro' Florence)—  
 Dante, who loved well because he hated,  
 Hated wickedness that hinders loving,  
 Dante standing, studying his angel,—  
 In there broke the folk of his Inferno.  
 Says he—"Certain people of importance"  
 (Such he gave his daily, dreadful line to)

Entered and would seize, forsooth, the poet.  
Says the poet—"Then I stopped my painting."

VI.

You and I would rather see that angel,  
Painted by the tenderness of Dante,  
Would we not?—than read a fresh Inferno.

VII.

You and I will never see that picture.  
While he mused on love and Beatrice,  
While he softened o'er his outlined angel,  
In they broke, those "people of importance":  
We and Bice bear the loss for ever.

VIII.

What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture?

IX.

This: no artist lives and loves that longs not  
Once, and only once, and for one only,  
(Ah, the prize!) to find his love a language  
Fit and fair and simple and sufficient—  
Using nature that's an art to others,  
Not, this one time, art that's turned his nature.  
Ay, of all the artists living, loving,  
None but would forego his proper dowry,—



Does he paint? he fain would write a poem,—  
Does he write? he fain would paint a picture,  
Put to proof art alien to the artist's,  
Once, and only once, and for one only,  
So to be the man and leave the artist,  
Save the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow.

x.

Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement!

He who smites the rock and spreads the water,  
Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him,  
Even he, the minute makes immortal,  
Proves, perchance, his mortal in the minute,  
Desecrates, belike, the deed in doing.

While he smites, how can he but remember,  
So he smote before, in such a peril,  
When they stood and mocked—"Shall smiting  
help us?"

When they drank and sneered—"A stroke is  
easy!"

When they wiped their mouths and went their  
journey,

Throwing him for thanks—"But drought was  
pleasant."

Thus old memories mar the actual triumph;

Thus the doing savours of disrelish ;  
Thus achievement lacks a gracious somewhat ;  
O'er-importuned brows becloud the mandate,  
Carelessness or consciousness, the gesture.  
For he bears an ancient wrong about him,  
Sees and knows again those phalanxed faces,  
Hears, yet one time more, the 'customed  
prelude—

“How should'st thou, of all men, smite, and save  
us?”

Guesses what is like to prove the sequel—

“Egypt's flesh - pots — nay, the drought was  
better.”

XI.

Oh, the crowd must have emphatic warrant !  
Theirs, the Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance,  
Right-arm's rod-sweep, tongue's imperial fiat.  
Never dares the man put off the prophet.

XII.

Did he love one face from out the thousands,  
(Were she Jethro's daughter, white and wifely,  
Were she but the Æthiopian bondslave,)  
He would envy yon dumb patient camel,  
Keeping a reserve of scanty water  
Meant to save his own life in the desert ;

Ready in the desert to deliver  
(Kneeling down to let his breast be opened)  
Hoard and life together for his mistress.

XIII.

I shall never, in the years remaining,  
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,  
Make you music that should all-express me ;  
So it seems : I stand on my attainment.  
This of verse alone, one life allows me ;  
Verse and nothing else have I to give you.  
Other heights in other lives, God willing—  
All the gifts from all the heights, your own,  
Love !

XIV.

Yet a semblance of resource avails us—  
Shade so finely touched, love's sense must seize  
it.  
Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly,  
Lines I write the first time and the last time.  
He who works in fresco, steals a hair-brush,  
Curbs the liberal hand, subservient proudly,  
Cramps his spirit, crowds its all in little,  
Makes a strange art of an art familiar,  
Fills his lady's missal-marge with flowerets.  
He who blows thro' bronze, may breathe thro'  
silver,

Fitly serenade a slumbrous princess,  
He who writes, may write for once, as I do.

XV.

Love, you saw me gather men and women,  
Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy,  
Enter each and all, and use their service,  
Speak from every mouth,—the speech, a poem.  
Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,  
Hopes and fears, belief and disbelieving :  
I am mine and yours—the rest be all men's,  
Karshook, Cleon, Norbert and the fifty.  
Let me speak this once in my true person,  
Not as Lippo, Roland or Andrea,  
Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence—  
Pray you, look on these my men and women,  
Take and keep my fifty poems finished ;  
Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also !  
Poor the speech ; be how I speak, for all things.

XVI.

Not but that you know me ! Lo, the moon's  
self !

Here in London, yonder late in Florence,  
Still we find her face, the thrice-transfigured,  
Curving on a sky imbrued with colour,  
Drifted over Fiesole by twilight,

Came she, our new crescent of a hair's-breadth.  
Full she flared it, lamping Samminiato,  
Rounder 'twixt the cypresses and rounder,  
Perfect till the nightingales applauded.  
Now, a piece of her old self, impoverished,  
Hard to greet, she traverses the house-roofs,  
Hurries with unhandsome thrift of silver,  
Goes dispiritedly,—glad to finish.

XVII.

What, there's nothing in the moon note-worthy?  
Nay—for if that moon could love a mortal,  
Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy)  
All her magic ('tis the old sweet mythos)  
She would turn a new side to her mortal,  
Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman—  
Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,  
Blind to Galileo on his turret,  
Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats—him, even!  
Think, the wonder of the moonstruck mortal—  
When she turns round, comes again in heaven,  
Opens out anew for worse or better?  
Proves she like some portent of an ice-berg  
Swimming full upon the ship it founders,  
Hungry with huge teeth of splintered crystals?  
Proves she as the paved-work of a sapphire  
Seen by Moses when he climbed the mountain?

Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu  
Climbed and saw the very God, the Highest,  
Stand upon the paved-work of a sapphire.  
Like the bodied heaven in his clearness  
Shone the stone, the sapphire of that paved-work,  
When they ate and drank and saw God also !

XVIII.

What were seen? None knows, none ever shall  
know.

Only this is sure—the sight were other,  
Not the moon's same side, born late in Florence,  
Dying now impoverished here in London.  
God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures  
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,  
One to show a woman when he loves her.

XIX.

This I say of me, but think of you, Love !  
This to you—yourself my moon of poets !  
Ah, but that's the world's side—there's the  
wonder—

Thus they see you, praise you, think they know  
you.

There, in turn I stand with them and praise you,  
Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.  
But the best is when I glide from out them,

Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,  
Come out on the other side, the novel  
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,  
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

XX.

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,  
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,  
Wrote one song—and in my brain I sing it,  
Drew one angel—borne, see, on my bosom!

ROBERT BROWNING.

A Wedding ♪   ♪   ♪   ♪   ♪   ♪

O TRUE and tried, so well and long,  
Demand not thou a marriage lay;  
In that it is thy marriage day  
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
Since first he told me that he loved  
A daughter of our house; nor proved  
Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er  
Some thrice three years: they went and came,  
Remade the blood and changed the frame,  
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm  
    In dying songs a dead regret,  
    But like a statue solid-set,  
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
    Than in the summers that are flown,  
    For I myself with these have grown  
To something greater than before ;

Which makes appear the songs I made  
    As echoes out of weaker times,  
    As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,  
    That must be made a wife ere noon ?  
    She enters, glowing like the moon  
Of Eden on its bridal bower :

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
    And then on thee ; they meet thy look  
    And brighten like the star that shook  
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,  
    He too foretold the perfect rose.  
    For thee she grew, for thee she grows  
For ever, and as fair as good.



And thou art worthy ; full of power ;  
As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,  
Consistent ; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out : the noon is near,  
And I must give away the bride ;  
She fears not, or with thee beside  
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,  
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
That shielded all her life from harm  
At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;  
Their pensive tablets round her head,  
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
The " wilt thou " answer'd, and again  
The " wilt thou " ask'd, till out of twain  
Her sweet " I will " has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,  
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
By village eyes as yet unborn ;  
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
The joy to every wandering breeze ;  
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours  
Await them. Many a merry face  
Salutes them—maidens of the place,  
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride  
With him to whom her hand I gave.  
They leave the porch, they pass the grave  
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,  
For them the light of life increased,  
Who stay to share the morning feast,  
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance  
To meet and greet a whiter sun ;  
My drooping memory will not shun  
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,  
As drinking health to bride and groom  
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I  
Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,  
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
And those white-favour'd horses wait ;  
They rise, but linger ; it is late ;  
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
From little cloudlets on the grass,  
But sweeps away as out we pass  
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
And talk of others that are wed,  
And how she look'd, and what he said,  
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
The shade of passing thought, the wealth  
Of words and wit, the double health,  
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance ;—till I retire :  
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,  
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,  
And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
Till over down and over dale  
All night the shining vapour sail  
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
And catch at every mountain head,  
And o'er the friths that branch and spread  
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
With tender gloom the roof, the wall ;  
And breaking let the splendour fall  
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
And, star and system rolling past,  
A soul shall draw from out the vast  
And strike his being into bounds.

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,  
Result in man, be born and think,  
And act and love, a closer link  
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
On knowledge ; under whose command  
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand  
Is Nature like an open book ;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
For all we thought and loved and did,  
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
Of what in them is flower and fruit ;

Whereof the man, that with me trod  
This planet, was a noble type  
Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.

TENNYSON.



BOOK IV

A LITTLE PHILOSOPHY





Truth



BALADE DE BON CONSEYL.

FLEE fro the prees, and dwelle with soth-  
fastnesse

Suffice unto thy thyng though hit be small ;  
For hord hath hate and clymyng tikelnesse,  
Prees hath envye, and wele blent overal ;  
Savour no more than thee behove shall  
Werk well thyself, that other folk canst rede,  
And trouthe shal deliver, it is no drede.

Tempest thee noght al crokèd to redresse  
In trust of hir that turneth as a bal :  
Greet reste stant in litel besynesse ;  
An eek be war to sporne ageyn an al ;  
Stryve noght, as doth the crokke with the wal.  
Daunte thyself, that dauntest otheres dede  
And trouthe shall deliver, it is no drede.

That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,  
The wrastling for this worlde axeth a fall.  
Her nis non hoom, her nis but wildernesse.  
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy  
stall,  
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;  
Hold the hye wey, and lat thy gost thee lede,  
And trouth shall deliver, it is no drede.

ENVOY.

Therefore, thou vache, leve thyn old wrecchednesse  
Unto the world; leve now to be thral;  
Crye him mercy, that of his hy goodnesse  
Made thee of noght, and in especial  
Draw unto him, and pray in general  
For thee, and eek for other, hevenlich mede;  
And trouthe shall deliver, it is no drede.

*(Explicit le bon conseil de G. Chaucer.)*

CHAUCER.

Character of a Happy Life



HOW happy is he born and taught  
That serveth not another's will;  
Whose armour is his honest thought  
And simple truth his utmost skill!

Whose passions not his masters are,  
Whose soul is still prepared for death,  
Untied unto the world by care  
Of public fame or private breath ;

Who envies none that chance doth raise  
Nor vice ; who never understood  
How deepest wounds are given by praise ;  
Nor rules of state, but rules of good :

Who hath his life from rumours freed,  
Whose conscience is his strong retreat ;  
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,  
Nor ruin make oppressors great ;

Who God doth late and early pray  
More of His grace than gifts to lend ;  
And entertains the harmless day  
With a religious book or friend ;

This man is freed from servile bands  
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall ;  
Lord of himself, though not of lands ;  
And having nothing, yet hath all.

SIR H. WOTTON.



MINE be a cot beside the hill ;  
 A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear ;  
 A willowy brook, that turns a mill,  
 With many a fall, shall linger near.

The swallow oft, beneath my thatch,  
 Shall twitter near her clay-built nest ;  
 Oft shall the pilgrim lift the latch,  
 And share my meal, a welcome guest.

Around my ivied porch shall spring  
 Each fragrant flower that drinks the dew ;  
 And Lucy, at her wheel, shall sing,  
 In russet gown and apron blue.

The village church beneath the trees  
 Where first our marriage vows were given,  
 With merry peals shall swell the breeze  
 And point with taper spire to heaven.

SAMUEL ROGERS.



THE world is too much with us ; late and  
 soon,  
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :  
 Little we see in nature that is ours ;

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !  
 This sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;  
 The winds that will be howling at all hours,  
 And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;  
 For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;  
 It moves us not.—Great God ! I'd rather be  
 A pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;  
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;  
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;  
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

WORDSWORTH.

Ulysses                                    

I T little profits that an idle king,  
     By this still hearth, among these barren  
         craggs,  
 Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not  
     me.

I cannot rest from travel : I will drink  
 Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd  
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those  
 That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when

Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;  
For always roaming with a hungry heart  
Much have I seen and known ; cities of men,  
And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all ;  
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
I am a part of all that I have met ;  
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin  
fades

For ever and for ever when I move.  
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !  
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life  
Were all too little, and of one to me  
Little remains : but every hour is saved  
From that eternal silence, something more,  
A bringer of new things ; and vile it were  
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,  
And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—  
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil

This labour, by slow prudence to make mild  
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
Of common duties, decent not to fail  
In offices of tenderness, and pay  
Meet adoration to my household gods,  
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail:  
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,  
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought  
with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took  
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed  
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;  
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;  
Death closes all: but something ere the end,  
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.  
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:  
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the  
deep

Moans round with many voices. Come, my  
friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds

To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.  
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.  
Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and tho'  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we  
are ;

One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

TENNYSON.

French Revolution     

As it appeared to enthusiasts at its commencement.

**O**H ! pleasant exercise of hope and joy !  
For mighty were the auxiliars which then  
stood

Upon our side, we who were strong in love !  
Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very heaven !—Oh ! times  
In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways  
Of custom, law, and statute, took at once  
The attraction of a country in romance !



When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights,  
When most intent on making of herself  
A prime enchantress—to assist the work  
Which then was going forward in her name !  
Not favoured spots alone, but the whole earth,  
The beauty wore of promise—that which sets  
(To take an image which was felt no doubt  
Among the bowers of paradise itself)  
The budding rose above the rose full blown.  
What temper at the prospect did not wake  
To happiness unthought of? The inert  
Were roused, and lively natures rapt away !  
They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,  
The playfellows of fancy, who had made  
All powers of swiftness, subtilty, and strength  
Their ministers,—who in lordly wise had stirred  
Among the grandest objects of the sense,  
And dealt with whatsoever they found there  
As if they had within some lurking right  
To wield it ;—they, too, who of gentle mood  
Had watched all gentle motions, and to these  
Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more  
mild,  
And in the region of their peaceful selves ;—  
Now was it that *both* found, the meek and lofty  
Did both find helpers to their heart's desire,  
And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish,—

Were called upon to exercise their skill,  
Not in Utopia,—subterraneous fields,—  
Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where !  
But in the very world, which is the world  
Of all of us,—the place where in the end  
We find our happiness, or not at all !

WORDSWORTH.

In Utrumque Paratus



I F, in the silent mind of One all-pure  
At first imagined lay  
The sacred world ; and by procession sure  
From those still deeps, in form and colour drest,  
Seasons alternating, and night and day,  
The long-mused thought to north, south, east and  
west,  
Took then its all-seen way ;

O waking on a world which thus-wise springs !  
Whether it needs thee count  
Betwixt thy waking and the birth of things  
Ages or hours—O waking on life's stream !  
By lonely pureness to the all-pure fount  
(Only by this thou canst) the coloured dream  
Of life remount !

Thin, thin the pleasant human noises grow,  
And faint the city gleams ;  
Rare the lone pastoral huts—marvel not thou !  
The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,  
But to the stars, and the cold lunar beams ;  
Alone the sun arises, and alone  
Spring the great streams.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Fragment from "The Recluse"    ∞    ∞    ∞

ON Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,  
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive  
Fair trains of imagery before me rise,  
Accompanied by feelings of delight  
Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed ;  
And I am conscious of affecting thoughts  
And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes  
Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh  
The good and evil of our mortal state.  
—To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come,  
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,  
Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself,  
I would give utterance in numerous verse.  
Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope—  
And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith ;

Of blessed consolations in distress ;  
Of moral strength, and intellectual power ;  
Of joy in widest commonalty spread ;  
Of the individual mind that keeps her own  
Inviolatè retirement, subject there  
To Conscience only, and the Law supreme  
Of that intelligence which governs all ;  
I sing :—" fit audience let me find, though few ! "

So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard,  
Holiest of men.—Urania, I shall need  
Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such  
Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven !  
For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink  
Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds  
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.  
All strength—all terror, single or in bands,  
That ever was put forth in personal form ;  
Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir  
Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones—  
I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not  
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,  
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out  
By help of dreams, can breed such fear and awe  
As fall upon us often when we look  
Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man,  
My haunt, and the main region of my song.

—Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,  
Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms  
Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed  
From earth's materials—waits upon my steps ;  
Pitches her tents before me as I move,  
An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves  
Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old  
Sought in the Atlantic Main—why should they be  
A history only of departed things,  
Or a mere fiction of what never was ?  
For the discerning intellect of Man,  
When wedded to this goodly universe  
In love and holy passion, shall find these  
A simple produce of the common day.  
I, long before the blissful hour arrives,  
Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse  
Of this great consummation :—and, by words  
Which speak of nothing more than what we are,  
Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep  
Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain  
To noble raptures ; while my voice proclaims  
How exquisitely the individual Mind  
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less  
Of the whole species) to the external World  
Is fitted :—and how exquisitely, too,  
Theme this but little heard of among Men,  
The external World is fitted to the Mind ;

And the creation (by no lower name  
Can it be called) which they with blended might  
Accomplish :—this is our high argument.  
—Such grateful haunts forgoing, if I oft  
Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes  
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights  
Of madding passions mutually inflamed ;  
Must hear Humanity in fields and groves  
Pipe solitary anguish ; or must hang  
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm  
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore  
Within the walls of Cities ; may these sounds  
Have their authentic comment,—that even these  
Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn !  
—Descend, prophetic Spirit ! that inspirest  
The human Soul of universal earth,  
Dreaming on things to come ; and dost possess  
A metropolitan Temple in the hearts  
Of mighty Poets ; upon me bestow  
A gift of genuine insight ; that my Song  
With star-like virtue in its place may shine,  
Shedding benignant influence,—and secure,  
Itself, from all malevolent effect  
Of those mutations that extend their sway  
Throughout the nether sphere !—And if with this  
I mix more lowly matter ; with the thing  
Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man

Contemplating, and who, and what he was,  
The transitory Being that beheld  
This Vision,—when and where, and how he  
lived ;—

Be not this labour useless. If such theme  
May sort with highest objects, then, dread Power,  
Whose gracious favour is the primal source  
Of all illumination, may my Life  
Express the image of a better time,  
More wise desires, and simpler manners ;—nurse  
My Heart in genuine freedom :—all pure thoughts  
Be with me ;—so shall Thy unfailing love  
Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end !

WORDSWORTH.

The Struggle      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪

SAY not, the struggle nought availeth,  
The labour and the wounds are vain ;  
The enemy faints not nor faileth,  
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars ;  
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,  
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,  
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves vainly breaking  
Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,  
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only  
When daylight comes, comes in the light,  
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly,  
But westward, look, the land is bright.

A. H. CLOUGH.

Wages      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of  
song,

Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an  
endless sea—

Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the  
wrong—

Nay, but she aimed not at glory, no lover of  
glory she :

Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death : if the wages of Virtue  
be dust,

Would she have heart to endure for the life  
of the worm and the fly ?



She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of  
the just,

To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a  
summer sky :

Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

TENNYSON.

I Am the Way      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪

THOU art the Way.

Hadst Thou been nothing but  
the goal,

I cannot say

If Thou hadst ever met my soul.

I cannot see—

I, child of process—if there lies

An end for me,

Full of repose, full of replies.

I'll not reproach

The way that goes, my feet that stir.

Access, approach,

Art Thou, time, way, and wayfarer.

ALICE MEYNELL.

WE cannot kindle when we will  
 The fire which in the heart resides ;  
 The spirit bloweth and is still,  
 In mystery our soul abides.

But tasks in hours of insight willed  
 Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.

With aching hands and bleeding feet  
 We dig and heap, lay stone on stone ;  
 We bear the burden and the heat  
 Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.

Not till the hours of light return,  
 All we have built do we discern.

Then when the clouds are off the soul,  
 When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,  
 Ask, how *she* viewed thy self-control,  
 Thy struggling, tasked morality—  
 Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,  
 Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,  
 Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,  
 See, on her face a glow is spread,  
 A strong emotion on her cheek !

“ Ah, child ! ” she cries, “ that strife divine,  
 Whence was it, for it is not mine ? ”

“There is no effort on *my* brow—  
I do not strive, I do not weep ;  
I rush with the swift spheres and glow  
In joy, and when I will, I sleep.

Yet that severe, that earnest air,  
I saw, I felt it once—but where ?

“I knew not yet the gauge of time,  
Nor wore the manacles of space ;  
I felt it in some other clime,  
I saw it in some other place,  
’Twas when the heavenly house I trod,  
And lay upon the breast of God.”

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

The Neophyte      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪

WHO knows what days I answer for to-day ?  
Giving the bud I give the flower. I bow  
This yet unfaded and a fading brow ;  
Bending these knees and feeble knees, I pray.

Thoughts yet unripe in me I bend one way,  
Give one repose to pain I know not now,  
One leaven to joy that comes, I guess not how.  
I dedicate my fields when Spring is grey.

Oh, rash ! (I smile) to pledge my hidden wheat.  
I fold to-day at altars far apart  
Hands trembling with what toils ? In their  
retreat  
I seal my love to-be, my folded art.  
I light the tapers at my head and feet,  
And lay the crucifix on this silent heart.

ALICE MEYNELL.

Ode to Duty



“Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eò perductus, ut non  
tantum rectè facere possim, sed nisi rectè facere non  
possim.”

S TERN Daughter of the Voice of God !  
O Duty ! if that name thou love  
Who art a light to guide, a rod  
To check the erring, and reprove ;  
Thou, who art victory and law  
When empty terrors overawe ;  
From vain temptations dost set free ;  
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity !

There are who ask not if thine eye  
Be on them ; who, in love and truth,  
Where no misgiving is, rely  
Upon the genial sense of youth :

Glad Hearts ! without reproach or blot ;  
Who do thy work, and know it not :  
Long may the kindly impulse last !  
But Thou, if they should totter, teach them to  
stand fast !

Serene will be our days and bright,  
And happy will our nature be,  
When love is an unerring light,  
And joy its own security.  
And they a blissful course may hold  
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,  
Live in the spirit of this creed ;  
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their  
need.

I, loving freedom, and untried,  
No sport of every random gust,  
Yet being to myself a guide,  
Too blindly have reposed my trust ;  
And oft, when in my heart was heard  
Thy timely mandate, I deferred  
The task, in smoother walks to stray ;  
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I  
may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,  
Or strong compunction in me wrought,  
I supplicate for thy control ;  
But in the quietness of thought :  
Me this unchartered freedom tires ;  
I feel the weight of chance desires :  
My hopes no more must change their name,  
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear  
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;  
Nor know we anything so fair  
As is the smile upon thy face :  
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,  
And fragrance in thy footing treads ;  
Thou dost preserve the Stars from wrong ;  
And the most ancient Heavens, through thee,  
are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power !  
I call thee : I myself commend  
Unto thy guidance from this hour ;  
Oh, let my weakness have an end !  
Give unto me, made lowly wise,  
The spirit of self-sacrifice ;  
The confidence of reason give ;  
And in the light of truth thy bondman let me live !

WORDSWORTH.

BOOK V  
A JOY FOR EVER





A Joy for Ever



  A THING of beauty is a joy for ever :  
  Its loveliness increases ; it will never  
Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet  
    breathing.

Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing  
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth  
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways  
Made for our searching : yes, in spite of all,  
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,  
Trees old, and young, sprouting a shady boon  
For simple sheep ; and such are daffodils  
With the green world they live in ; and clear rills  
That for themselves a cooling covert make  
'Gainst the hot season ; the mid forest brake,

Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms :  
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms  
We have imagined for the mighty dead ;  
All lovely tales that we have heard or read :  
An endless fountain of immortal drink,  
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

KEATS.

Auguries of Innocence                        

TO see a world in a grain of sand,  
A heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand  
And eternity in an hour.

BLAKE.

The Daffodils                              

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host of golden daffodils ;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,

They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay :  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they  
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee :—  
A poet could not but be gay  
In such a jocund company :  
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought ;

For oft when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude,  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

WORDSWORTH.

Ode on a Grecian Urn      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪

I.

THOU still unravished bride of quietness,  
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,  
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme ;

What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape  
Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?  
What men or gods are these? What maidens  
loth?  
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

II.

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,  
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave  
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;  
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
Though winning near the goal — yet, do not  
grieve;  
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,  
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

III.

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed  
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;  
And, happy melodist, unwearied,  
For ever piping songs for ever new;

More happy love ! more happy, happy love !  
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,  
For ever panting, and for ever young ;  
All breathing human passion far above,  
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,  
A burning forehead and a parching tongue.

IV.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice ?  
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,  
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest ?  
What little town by river or sea-shore,  
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn ?  
And, little town, thy streets for evermore  
Will silent be ; and not a soul to tell  
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

V.

O Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with brede  
Of marble men and maidens over-wrought,  
With forest branches and the trodden weed ;  
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of  
thought

As doth eternity : Cold pastoral !

When old age shall this generation waste,  
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,  
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know

KEATS.

The Guardian-Angel                        

A PICTURE AT FANO.

I.

DEAR and great Angel, wouldst thou only  
leave

That child, when thou hast done with him, for  
me !

Let me sit all the day here, that when eve

Shall find performed thy special ministry  
And time come for departure, thou, suspending  
Thy flight, mayst see another child for tending,  
Another still to quiet and retrieve.

II.

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,  
From where thou standest now, to where I  
gaze,

And suddenly my head be covered o'er

With those wings, white above the child who  
prays

Now on that tomb—and I shall feel thee guarding  
Me, out of all the world ; for me, discarding

Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes  
its door !

III.

I would not look up thither past thy head

Because the door opes, like that child, I know,  
For I should have thy gracious face instead,

Thou bird of God ! And wilt thou bend me low  
Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,  
And lift them up to pray, and gently tether

Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garments  
spread ?

IV.

If this was ever granted, I would rest

My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands  
Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,

Pressing the brain, which too much thought  
expands,

Back to its proper size again, and smoothing  
Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,  
And all lay quiet, happy and supprest.

How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired !

I think how I should view the earth and skies  
And sea, when once again my brow was bared

After thy healing, with such different eyes.

O world, as God has made it ! all is beauty :

And knowing this, is love, and love is duty.

What further may be sought for or declared ?

ROBERT BROWNING.

## THE MIGHTY DEAD.

### I.

To Toussaint L'Ouverture



**T**OUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men !  
Whether the whistling rustic tend his  
plough

Within thy hearing, or thy head be now

Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den ;

O miserable chieftain ! where and when

Wilt thou find patience ? Yet die not ! do thou

Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow :

Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,

Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind

Powers that will work for thee : air, earth, and  
skies :



There's not a breathing of the common wind  
That will forget thee ; thou hast great allies ;  
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,  
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

WORDSWORTH.

## II.

### ADONAIS.

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS, AUTHOR  
OF "ENDYMION," "HYPERION," ETC.

### PREFACE.

Φάρμακον ἦλθε, Βίων, ποτὶ σὸν στόμα, φάρμακον εἶδες.  
πῶς τευ τοῖς χεῖλεσσι ποτέδραμε, κοῦκ ἐγλυκάνθη ;  
τίς δέ βροτὸς τοσσοῦτον ἀνάμερος, ἢ κεράσαι τοι,  
ἢ δοῦναι λαλέοντι τὸ φάρμακον ; ἐκφυγεν ῥᾶν.

—MOSCHUS, *Epitaph. Bion.*

IT is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled prove at least that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of *Hyperion* as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the — of — 1821 ; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and

the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where cankerworms abound, what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgments from more candid critics of the true greatness of his powers were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows or one like Keats's composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to *Endymion*, was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated, with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, *Paris*, and *Woman*, and a *Syrian Tale*, and Mrs. Lefanu, and Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Howard Payne, and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men who in their venal good nature presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have

wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the *Elegy* was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of *Endymion* was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome, and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, "almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend." Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from "such stuff as dreams are made of." His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career—may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

## ADONAI8.

### I.

**I** WEEP for Adonais—he is dead!  
Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears  
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!  
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years

To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,  
And teach them thine own sorrow, say: "With  
me  
Died Adonais; till the Future dares  
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be  
An echo and a light unto eternity!"

II.

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,  
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which  
flies  
In darkness? where was lorn Urania  
When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,  
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise  
She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,  
Rekindled all the fading melodies,  
With which, like flowers that mock the corse  
beneath,  
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of  
Death.

III.

Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!  
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!  
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning  
bed  
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep,

Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep ;  
For he is gone, where all things wise and fair  
Descend ;—oh, dream not that the amorous  
    Deep  
Will yet restore him to the vital air ;  
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our  
    despair.

IV.

Most musical of mourners, weep again !  
Lament anew, Urania !—he died,  
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,  
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's  
    pride,  
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,  
Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite  
Of lust and blood ; he went, unterrified,  
Into the gulf of death ; but his clear Sprite  
Yet reigns o'er earth ; the third among the sons  
    of light.

V.

Most musical of mourners, weep anew !  
Not all to that bright station dared to climb ;  
And happier they their happiness who knew,  
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of  
    time

In which suns perished ; others more sublime,  
Struck by the envious wrath of man or god,  
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime ;  
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,  
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's  
serene abode.

VI.

But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has  
perished—  
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,  
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,  
And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew ;  
Most musical of mourners, weep anew !  
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,  
The bloom, whose petals nipped before they  
blew  
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste ;  
The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

VII.

To that high Capital, where kingly death  
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,  
He came ; and bought, with price of purest  
breath,  
A grave among the eternal.—Come away !

Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day  
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still  
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;  
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill  
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII.

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—  
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace  
The shadow of white Death, and at the door  
Invisible Corruption waits to trace  
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;  
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe  
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface  
So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law  
Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain  
draw.

IX.

Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,  
The passion-wingèd Ministers of thought,  
Who were his flocks, whom near the living  
streams  
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught  
The love which was its music, wander not,—  
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,

But droop there, whence they sprung; and  
mourn their lot  
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet  
pain,  
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home  
again.

x.

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold  
head,  
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and  
cries ;  
“ Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead ;  
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,  
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies  
A tear some Dream has loosened from his  
brain.”  
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise !  
She knew not 'twas her own ; as with no stain  
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its  
rain.

xi.

One from a lucid urn of starry dew  
Washed his light limbs as if embalming them ;  
Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw  
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,



Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem ;  
Another in her wilful grief would break  
Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem  
A greater loss with one which was more weak ;  
And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen cheek.

XII.

Another Splendour on his mouth alit,  
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the  
breath  
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded  
wit,  
And pass into the panting heart beneath  
With lightning and with music : the damp death  
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips ;  
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath  
Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night  
clips,  
It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to  
its eclipse.

XIII.

And others came . . . Desires and Adorations,  
Wingèd Persuasions and veiled Destinies,  
Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering  
Incarnations  
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies ;

And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,  
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam  
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,  
Came in slow pomp ;—the moving pomp might  
    seem  
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

XIV.

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,  
From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet  
    sound,  
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought  
Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,  
Wet with the tears which should adorn the  
    ground,  
Dimmed the ærial eyes that kindle day ;  
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,  
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,  
And the wild Winds flew round, sobbing in their  
    dismay.

XV.

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,  
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,  
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,  
Or amorous birds perched on the young green  
    spray,

Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day ;  
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear  
Than those for whose disdain she pined away  
Into a shadow of all sounds :—a drear  
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen  
hear.

XVI.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she  
threw down  
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,  
Or they dead leaves ; since her delight is  
flown,  
For whom should she have waked the sullen  
year ?  
To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear  
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both  
Thou, Adonais : wan they stand and sere  
Amid the faint companions of their youth,  
With dew all turned to tears ; odour, to sighing  
ruth.

XVII.

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale  
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain ;  
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale  
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain

Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,  
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,  
As Albion wails for thee : the curse of Cain  
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent  
breast,  
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly  
guest !

XVIII.

Ah, woe is me ! Winter is come and gone,  
But grief returns with the revolving year ;  
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone ;  
The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear ;  
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Season's  
bier ;  
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,  
And build their mossy homes in field and brere ;  
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,  
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance  
awake.

XIX.

Through wood and stream and field and hill  
and Ocean  
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has  
burst  
As it has ever done, with change and motion,  
From the great morning of the world when first

God dawned on Chaos ; in its stream immersed,  
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light ;  
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst ;  
Diffuse themselves ; and spend in love's delight,  
The beauty and the joy of their renewèd might.

XX.

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit  
tender,  
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath ;  
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour  
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death  
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath ;  
Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which  
knows  
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath  
By sightless lightning ? — the intense atom  
glows  
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold  
repose.

XXI.

Alas ! that all we loved of him should be,  
But for our grief, as if it had not been,  
And grief itself be mortal ! Woe is me !  
Whence are we, and why are we ? of what  
scene

The actors or spectators? Great and mean  
Meet massed in death, who lends what life  
must borrow.

As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,  
Evening must usher night, night urge the  
morrow,  
Month follow month with woe, and year wake  
year to sorrow.

XXII.

*He* will awake no more, oh, never more!  
“Wake thou,” cried Misery, “childless Mother,  
rise

Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart’s core,  
A wound more fierce than his, with tears and  
sighs.”

And all the Dreams that watched Urania’s eyes,  
And all the Echoes whom their sister’s song  
Had held in holy silence, cried: “Arise!”

Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,  
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour  
sprung.

XXIII.

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs  
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear  
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,  
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,

Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear  
So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania ;  
So saddened round her like an atmosphere  
Of stormy mist ; so swept her on her way  
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV.

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,  
Through camps and cities rough with stone,  
and steel,  
And human hearts, which to her aëry tread  
Yielding not, wounded the invisible  
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell :  
And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp  
than they,  
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,  
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of  
May,  
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

XXV.

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,  
Shamed by the presence of that living Might  
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath  
Revisited those lips, and Life's pale light

Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear  
delight.

“Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,  
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!  
Leave me not!” cried Urania: her distress  
Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met  
her vain caress.

XXVI.

“Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;  
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;  
And in my heartless breast and burning brain  
That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else  
survive,  
With food of saddest memory kept alive,  
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part  
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give  
All that I am to be as thou now art!  
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence  
depart!

XXVII.

“O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,  
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men  
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty  
heart  
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?



Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then  
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?  
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when  
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,  
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee  
like deer.

XXVIII.

“The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;  
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;  
The vultures to the conqueror's banner true  
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,  
And whose wings rain contagion;—how they  
fled,  
When, like Apollo, from his golden bow  
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped  
And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second  
blow,  
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them  
lying low.

XXIX.

“The sun comes forth, and many reptiles  
spawn;  
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then  
Is gathered into death without a dawn,  
And the immortal stars awake again;

So is it in the world of living men :  
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight  
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and  
when  
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its  
light  
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful  
night."

xxx.

Thus ceased she : and the mountain shepherds  
came,  
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent ;  
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame  
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,  
An early but enduring monument,  
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song  
In sorrow ; from her wilds Ierne sent  
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,  
And Love taught Grief to fall like music from his  
tongue.

xxxI.

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,  
A phantom among men ; companionless  
As the last cloud of an expiring storm  
Whose thunder is its knell ; he, as I guess,

Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,  
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray  
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,  
And his own thoughts, along that rugged  
way,  
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and  
their prey.

XXXII.

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift—  
A Love in desolation masked ;—a Power  
Girt round with weakness ;—it can scarce  
uplift  
The weight of the superincumbent hour ;  
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,  
A breaking billow ;—even whilst we speak  
Is it not broken ? On the withering flower  
The killing sun smiles brightly : on a cheek  
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart  
may break.

XXXIII.

His head was bound with pansies overblown,  
And faded violets, white, and pied and blue ;  
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,  
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew

Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,  
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart  
Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that  
crew  
He came the last, neglected and apart;  
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's  
dart.

XXXIV.

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan  
Smiled through their tears; well knew that  
gentle band  
Who in another's fate now wept his own,  
As in the accents of an unknown land  
He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned  
The Stranger's mien, and murmured: "Who  
art thou?"  
He answered not, but with a sudden hand  
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,  
Which was like Cain's or Christ's—oh! that it  
should be so!

XXXV.

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?  
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?  
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,  
In mockery of monumental stone,

The heavy heart heaving without a moan ?  
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,  
Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed  
    one,  
Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,  
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

XXXVI.

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh !  
What deaf and viperous murderer could  
    crown  
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe ?  
The nameless worm would now itself disown :  
It felt, yet could escape, the magic tone  
Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,  
But what was howling in one breast alone,  
Silent with expectation of the song,  
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre  
    unstrung.

XXXVII.

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame !  
Live ! fear no heavier chastisement from me,  
Thou noteless blot on a remembered name !  
But be thyself, and know thyself to be !

And ever at thy season be thou free  
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow :  
Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee ;  
Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,  
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as  
now.

XXXVIII.

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled  
Far from these carrion kites that scream below ;  
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead ;  
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.—  
Dust to the dust ! but the pure spirit shall  
flow  
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,  
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow  
Through time and change, unquenchably the  
same,  
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth  
of shame.

XXXIX.

Peace, peace ! he is not dead, he doth not  
sleep—  
He hath awakened from the dream of life—  
'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep  
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,

And in mad trance, strike with our spirit'  
knife  
Invulnerable nothings.—*We* decay  
Like corpses in a charnel ; fear and grief  
Convulse us and consume us day by day,  
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our  
living clay.

XL.

He has outsoared the shadow of our night ;  
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,  
And that unrest which men miscall delight,  
Can touch him not and torture not again ;  
From the contagion of the world's slow stain  
He is secure, and now can never mourn  
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray  
vain ;  
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,  
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

XLI.

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead,  
he ;  
Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,  
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee  
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone ;

Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan !  
Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou  
Air,  
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst  
thrown  
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare  
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair !

XLII.

He is made one with Nature : there is heard  
His voice in all her music, from the moan  
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird ;  
He is a presence to be felt and known  
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,  
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move  
Which has withdrawn his being to its own ;  
Which wields the world with never-weari'd  
love,  
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XLIII.

He is a portion of the loveliness  
Which once he made more lovely : he doth bear  
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress  
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling  
there,



All new successions to the forms they wear ;  
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its  
flight  
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear ;  
And bursting in its beauty and its might  
From trees and beasts and men into the Heavens'  
light.

XLIV.

The splendours of the firmament of time  
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not ;  
Like stars to their appointed height they  
climb,  
And death is a low mist which cannot blot  
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought  
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,  
And love and life contend in it, for what  
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there  
And move like winds of light on dark and  
stormy air.

XLV.

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown  
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal  
thought,  
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton  
Rose pale,—his solemn agony had not

Yet faded from him ; Sidney, as he fought  
And as he fell and as he lived and loved  
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,  
Arose ; and Lucan, by his death approved :  
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

XLVI.

And many more, whose names on Earth are  
dark,  
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die  
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,  
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.  
“Thou art become as one of us,” they cry,  
“It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long  
Swung blind in unascended majesty,  
Silent alone amid a Heaven of Song.  
Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of our  
throng !”

XLVII.

Who mourns for Adonais ? Oh, come forth,  
Fond wretch ! and know thyself and him aright.  
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous  
Earth ;  
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light

Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might  
Sate the void circumference : then shrink  
Even to a point within our day and night ;  
And keep thy heart light lest it make thee  
sink

When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to  
the brink.

XLVIII.

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,  
Oh, not of him, but of our joy : 'tis nought  
That ages, empires, and religions there  
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought ;  
For such as he can lend,—they borrow not  
Glory from those who made the world their  
prey ;  
And he is gathered to the kings of thought  
Who waged contention with their time's decay,  
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

XLIX.

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,  
The grave, the city, and the wilderness ;  
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains  
rise,  
And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress

The bones of Desolation's nakedness  
Pass, till the spirit of the spot shall lead  
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access  
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead  
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is  
spread ;

L.

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull  
Time  
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand ;  
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,  
Pavilions the dust of him who planned  
This refuge for his memory, doth stand  
Like flame transformed to marble ; and beneath,  
A field is spread, on which a newer band  
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of  
death,  
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished  
breath.

LI.

Here pause : these graves are all too young as  
yet  
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned  
Its charge to each ; and if the seal is set,  
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,

Break it not thou ! too surely shalt thou find  
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,  
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind  
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.  
What Adonais is, why fear we to become ?

LII.

The One remains, the many change and pass ;  
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows  
fly ;  
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,  
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,  
Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,  
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost  
seek !  
Follow where all is fled !—Rome's azure sky,  
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak  
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

LIII.

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my  
Heart ?  
Thy hopes are gone before : from all things  
here  
They have departed ; thou shouldst now depart !  
A light is passed from the revolving year,

And man, and woman ; and what still is dear  
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.  
The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers  
near :

'Tis Adonais calls ! oh, hasten thither,  
No more let Life divide what Death can join  
together.

LIV.

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,  
That Beauty in which all things work and  
move,  
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse  
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love  
Which through the web of being blindly wove  
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,  
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
The fire for which all thirst ; now beams on me,  
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song  
Descends on me ; my spirit's bark is driven,  
Far from the shore, far from the trembling  
throng  
Whose sails were never to the tempest given ;

The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven !  
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar ;  
Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of  
Heaven,  
The soul of Adonais, like a star,  
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.  
SHELLEY.

III.

Morte D'Arthur    ∞    ∞    ∞    ∞    ∞

SO all day long the noise of battle rolled  
Among the mountains by the winter sea ;  
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord,  
King Arthur : then, because his wound was deep,  
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep

They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we  
Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,  
Walking about the gardens and the halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
I perish by this people which I made,—  
Tho' Merlin swore that I should come again  
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,  
I am so deeply smitten through the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how  
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
Holding the sword—and how I rowed across  
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known:  
But now delay not: take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere:  
Watch what thou seëst, and lightly bring me  
word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:  
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.  
A little thing may harm a wounded man.



Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruined shrine he stept  
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping  
down

By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :  
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,  
This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw : but at the last it seemed  
Better to leave Excalibur concealed  
There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
" Hast thou performed my mission which I gave ?  
What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
“ I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.”

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and  
pale :

“ Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,  
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :  
For surer sign had followed, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.”

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought ;  
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote  
His palms together, and he cried aloud :

“ And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.  
What good should follow this, if this were done ?  
What harm, undone ? deep harm to disobey,  
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself?  
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.  
What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,  
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,  
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, ' King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps  
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'  
So might some old man speak in the aftertime  
To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honour and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,  
And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :  
" What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
" I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur much in wrath :  
" Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !  
Authority forgets a dying king,

Laid widowed of the power in his eye  
That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art,  
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;  
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :  
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged  
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutched the sword,  
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great  
brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,  
And flashing round and round, and whirled in an  
arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock  
By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur :  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker  
breath :

“ Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.

Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ? ”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

“ Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;

But when I looked again, behold an arm,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.”

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard

“ My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,

And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear

My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.”

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,

And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere

Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,

And would have spoken, but he found not words,

Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sighed the King,  
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick,  
quick!

I fear it is too late, and I shall die."

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he  
walked,

Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.  
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he  
based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—  
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them; and descending they were ware  
That all the decks were dense with stately forms

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by  
these

Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from  
them rose

A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,

And, as it were one voice an agony

Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills

All night in a waste land, where no one comes,

Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"

And to the barge they came. There those three  
Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and  
wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them all

And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,

And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his  
hands,

And called him by his name, complaining loud,

And dropping bitter tears against his brow

Striped with dark blood : for all his face was  
white

And colourless, and like the withered moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ;

And all his greaves and cuisses dashed with drops

Of onset ; and the light and lustrous curls—

That made his forehead like a rising sun

High from the daïs-throne—were parched with  
dust ;  
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his  
lips.

So like a shattered column lay the King ;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
“ Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?  
For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
Such times have been not since the light that led  
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
Which was an image of the mighty world ;  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.”

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge :  
“ The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.



Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?

I have lived my life, and that which I have  
done

May He within Himself make pure! but thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face again,

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by  
prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy  
voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.

For what are men better than sheep or goats

That nourish a blind life within the brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer

Both for themselves and those who call them  
friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way

Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

But now farewell. I am going a long way

With these thou seest—if indeed I go—

(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)

To the island-valley of Avilion;

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,

Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies

Deep-meadowed, happy fair with orchard-lawns

And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.”

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted  
swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere  
Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died away.

TENNYSON.

Among the Mountains      ∞      ∞      ∞      ∞

From "The Excursion."

SO was he lifted gently from the ground,  
And with their freight homeward the  
shepherds moved

Through the dull mist, I following—when a step,  
A single step, that freed me from the skirts  
Of the blind vapour, opened to my view  
Glory beyond all glory ever seen  
By waking sense or by the dreaming soul!  
The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,  
Was of a mighty city, boldly say  
A wilderness of building, sinking far  
And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,  
Far sinking into splendour—without end!

Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,  
With alabaster domes, and silver spires,  
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high  
Uplifted ; here, serene pavilions bright,  
In avenues disposed ; there, towers begirt  
With battlements that on their restless fronts  
Bore stars—illumination of all gems !  
By earthly nature had the effect been wrought  
Upon the dark materials of the storm  
Now pacified ; on them, and on the coves  
And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto  
The vapours had receded, taking there  
Their station under a cerulean sky.  
Oh, 'twas an unimaginable sight !  
Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald

turf,

Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,  
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,  
Molten together, and composing thus,  
Each lost in each, that marvellous array  
Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge  
Fantastic pomp of structure without name,  
In fleecy folds voluminous enwrapped.  
Right in the midst, where interspace appeared  
Of open court, an object like a throne  
Under a shining canopy of state  
Stood fixed ; and fixed resemblances were seen

To implements of ordinary use,  
 But vast in size, in substance glorified ;  
 Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld  
 In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest power,  
 For admiration and mysterious awe.  
 This little Vale, a dwelling-place of Man,  
 Lay low beneath my feet ; twas visible—  
 I saw not, but I felt that it was there.  
 That which I *saw* was the revealed abode  
 Of spirits in beatitude : my heart  
 Swelled in my breast—"I have been dead," I  
     cried,  
 " And now I live ! Oh ! wherefore *do* I live ?"  
 And with that pang I prayed to be no more !

WORDSWORTH.

Correlated Greatness                        

O NOTHING, in this corporal earth of man,  
     That to the imminent heaven of his high  
         soul

Responds with colour and with shadow, can  
 Lack correlated greatness. If the scroll  
 Where thoughts lie fast in spell of hieroglyph  
 Be mighty through its mighty habitants ;  
 If God be in His Name ; grave potency if  
 The sounds unbind of hieratic chants ;

All's vast that vastness means. Nay, I affirm  
Nature is whole in her least things exprest,  
Nor know we with what scope God builds the  
worm.

Our towns are copied fragments from our breast ;  
And all man's Babylons strive but to impart  
The grandeurs of his Babylonian heart.

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

Lines      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON  
REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A  
TOUR.

JULY 13, 1798.

FIVE years have past ; five summers, with the  
length  
Of five long winters ! and again I hear  
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs  
With a sweet inland murmur.<sup>1</sup>—Once again  
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,  
That on a wild secluded scene impress  
Thoughts of more deep seclusion ; and connect  
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

<sup>1</sup> The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

The day is come when I again repose  
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view  
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-  
tufts,

Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,  
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves  
Among the woods and copses, nor disturb  
The wild green landscape. Once again I see  
These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines  
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,  
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke  
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!  
With some uncertain notice, as might seem,  
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,  
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire  
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous Forms,  
Through a long absence, have not been to me  
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:  
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din  
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,  
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,  
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;  
And passing even into my purer mind,  
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too  
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,  
As have no slight or trivial influence

On that best portion of a good man's life,  
His little, nameless, unremembered acts  
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,  
To them I may have owed another gift,  
Of aspect more sublime ; that blessed mood,  
In which the burthen of the mystery,  
In which the heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world,  
Is lightened :—that serene and blessèd mood,  
In which the affections gently lead us on,—  
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame  
And even the motion of our human blood  
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
In body, and become a living soul :  
While with an eye made quiet by the power  
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
We see into the life of things.

If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh ! how oft,  
In darkness, and amid the many shapes  
Of joyless daylight ; when the fretful stir  
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,  
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,  
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,  
O sylvan Wye ! Thou wanderer thro' the  
    woods,  
How often has my spirit turned to thee !

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished  
thought,  
With many recognitions dim and faint,  
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,  
The picture of the mind revives again :  
While here I stand, not only with the sense  
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts  
That in this moment there is life and food  
For future years. And so I dare to hope,  
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was  
when first  
I came among these hills ; when like a roe  
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides  
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,  
Wherever nature led : more like a man  
Flying from something that he dreads, than  
one  
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature  
then  
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,  
And their glad animal movements all gone by)  
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint  
What then I was. The sounding cataract  
Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,  
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,  
Their colours and their forms, were then to me  
An appetite ; a feeling and a love,



That had no need of a remoter charm,  
By thought supplied, or any interest  
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,  
And all its aching joys are now no more,  
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this  
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts  
Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,  
Abundant recompence. For I have learned  
To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of humanity,  
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I  
still

A lover of the meadows and the woods,  
And mountains; and of all that we behold  
From this green earth; of all the mighty world  
Of eye and ear, both what they half create,

And what perceive ; well pleased to recognise  
In nature and the language of the sense,  
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
Of all my normal being.

Nor perchance,  
If I were not thus taught, should I the more  
Suffer my genial spirits to decay :  
For thou art with me, here, upon the banks  
Of this fair river ; thou, my dearest Friend,  
My dear, dear Friend, and in thy voice I catch  
The language of my former heart, and read  
My former pleasures in the shooting lights  
Of thy wild eyes. Oh ! yet a little while  
May I behold in thee what I was once,  
My dear, dear Sister ! and this prayer I make,  
Knowing that Nature never did betray  
The heart that loved her ; 'tis her privilege,  
Through all the years of this our life, to lead  
From joy to joy : for she can so inform  
The mind that is within us, so impress  
With quietness and beauty, and so feed  
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,  
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,  
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all  
The dreary intercourse of daily life,  
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb

Our cheerful faith that all which we behold  
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon  
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk ;  
And let the misty mountain winds be free  
To blow against thee : and in after years,  
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured  
Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind  
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,  
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place  
For all sweet sounds and harmonies ; oh ! then,  
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,  
Should be thy portion, with what healing  
thoughts

Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,  
And these my exhortations ! Nor, perchance  
If I should be where I no more can hear  
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these  
gleams

Of past existence, wilt thou then forget  
That on the banks of this delightful stream  
We stood together ; and that I, so long  
A worshipper of Nature, hither came  
Unwearied in that service : rather say  
With warmer love, oh ! with far deeper zeal  
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,  
That after many wanderings, many years  
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,

And this green pastoral landscape, were to me  
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake !

WORDSWORTH.

At a Solemn Musick



BLEST pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's  
joy ;

Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse ;  
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ  
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to  
pierce ;

And to our high-raised phantasy present  
That undisturbed song of pure concent  
Aye sung before the sapphire-coloured throne  
To Him that sits thereon,  
With saintly shout, and solemn jubilee ;  
Where the bright seraphim, in burning row,  
Their loud uplifted angel trumpets blow ;  
And the cherubic host, in thousand quires,  
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,  
With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,  
Hymns devout and holy psalms  
Singing everlastingly :  
That we on earth, with undiscording voice,  
May rightly answer that melodious noise ;

As once we did, till disproportioned sin  
 Jarred against Nature's chime, and with harsh din  
 Broke the fair musick that all creatures made  
 To their great Lord, whose love their motion  
     swayed  
 In perfect diapason, whilst they stood  
 In first obedience, and their state of good.  
 O, may we soon again renew that song,  
 And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere long  
 To His celestial concert us unite  
 To live with Him, and sing in endless morn of  
     light.

MILTON.

Abt Vogler      

(AFTER HE HAS BEEN EXTEMPORISING UPON THE  
 MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF HIS INVENTION.)

I.

WOULD that the structure brave, the mani-  
     fold music I build,  
 Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their  
     work,  
 Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch, as  
     when Solomon willed  
 Armies of Angels that soar, legions of demons  
     that lurk,

Man, brute, reptile, fly,—alien of end and of  
aim,  
Adverse, each from the other heaven-high, hell-  
deep removed,—  
Should rush into sight at once as he named the  
ineffable Name,  
And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure the  
princess he loved !

II.

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful  
building of mine,  
This which my keys in a crowd pressed and  
importuned to raise !  
Ah, one and all, how they helped, would dispart  
now and now combine,  
Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their master  
his praise !  
And one would bury his brow with a blind plunge-  
down to hell,  
Burrow awhile and build, broad on the roots of  
things,  
Then up again swim into sight, having based me  
my palace well,  
Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the nether  
springs.

### III.

And another would mount and march, like the  
 excellent minion he was,  
 Ay, another and yet another, one crowd but with  
 many a crest,  
 Raising my rampired walls of gold as transparent  
 as glass,  
 Eager to do and to die, yield each his place to  
 the rest :  
 For higher still and higher (as a runner tips with  
 fire,  
 When a great illumination surprises a festal  
 night—  
 Outlining round and round Rome's dome from  
 space to spire)  
 Up, the pinnacled glory reached, and the pride  
 of my soul was in sight.

### IV.

In sight ! Not half ! for it seemed, it was certain,  
 to match man's birth,  
 Nature in turn conceived, obeying an impulse  
 as I ;  
 And the emulous heaven yearned down, made  
 effort to reach the earth,  
 As the earth had done her best, in my passion,  
 to scale the sky :

Novel splendours burst forth, grew familiar and  
dwelt with mine,  
Not a point nor peak but found and fixed its  
wandering star ;  
Meteor-moons, balls of blaze : and they did not  
pale nor pine,  
For earth had attained to heaven, there was no  
more near nor far.

v.

Nay more ; for there wanted not who walked in  
the glare and glow,  
Presences plain in the place ; or, fresh from the  
Protoplast,  
Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier wind  
should blow,  
Lured now to begin and live, in a house to their  
liking at last ;  
Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed  
through the body and gone,  
But were back once more to breathe in an old  
world worth their new ;  
What never had been, was now ; what was, as it  
shall be anon ;  
And what is,—shall I say, matched both ? for I  
was made perfect too.



## VI.

All through my keys that gave their sounds to a  
     wish of my soul,  
 All through my soul that praised as its wish flowed  
     visibly forth,  
 All through music and me! For think, had I  
     painted the whole,  
 Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process  
     so wonder-worth :  
 Had I written the same, made verse—still, effect  
     proceeds from cause,  
 Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the  
     tale is told ;  
 It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to  
     laws,  
 Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list  
     enrolled :—

## VII.

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will  
     that can,  
 Existent behind all laws, that made them and,  
     lo, they are !  
 And I know not if, save in this, such a gift be  
     allowed to man,  
 That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth  
     sound, but a star.

Consider it well : each tone of our scale in itself  
is nought ;  
It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all  
is said :  
Give it to me to use ! I mix it with two in my  
thought ;  
And, there ! Ye have heard and seen : consider  
and bow the head !

VIII.

Well, it has gone at last, the palace of music I  
reared ;  
Gone ! and the good tears start, the praises that  
come too slow ;  
For one is assured at first, one scarce can say that  
he feared,  
That he even gave it a thought, the gone thing  
was to go.  
Never to be again ! But many more of the kind  
As good, nay, better perchance : is this your  
comfort to me ?  
To me, who must be saved because I cling with  
my mind  
To the same, same self, same love, same God :  
ay, what was, shall be.

## IX.

Therefore to whom turn I but to Thee, the ineffable Name ?

Builder and maker, Thou, of houses not made with hands !

What, have fear of change from Thee who art ever the same ?

Doubt that Thy power can fill the heart that Thy power expands ?

There shall never be one lost good ! What was, shall live as before ;

The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound ;

What was good, shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more ;

On the earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven, a perfect round.

## X.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist ;

Not its semblance, but itself ; no beauty, nor good, nor power

Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist

When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

The high that proved too high, the heroic for  
earth too hard,  
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in  
the sky,  
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the  
bard ;  
Enough that He heard it once : we shall hear it  
by and by.

XI.

And what is our failure here but a triumph's  
evidence  
For the fullness of the days ? Have we withered  
or agonised ?  
Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing  
might issue thence ?  
Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony  
should be prized ?  
Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,  
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal  
and woe :  
But God has a few of us whom He whispers in  
the ear ;  
The rest may reason and welcome, 'tis we musicians  
know.

Well, it is earth with me ; silence resumes her  
    reign :  
I will be patient and proud, and soberly acquiesce.  
Give me the keys. I feel for the common chord  
    again,  
Sliding by semitones, till I sink to the minor,—  
    yes,  
And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien  
    ground,  
Surveying awhile the heights I rolled from into  
    the deep ;  
Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my  
    resting-place is found,  
The C Major of this life : so, now I will try to  
    sleep.

ROBERT BROWNING.



BOOK VI  
OF SUCH AS THESE







PIPING down the valleys wild,  
Piping songs of pleasant glee,  
On a cloud I saw a child,  
And he laughing said to me :

“ Pipe a song about a Lamb ! ”  
So I piped with merry cheer.  
“ Piper, pipe that song again ” ;  
So I piped : he wept to hear.

“ Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe ;  
Sing thy songs of happy cheer ! ”  
So I sung the same again,  
While he wept with joy to hear.

“ Piper, sit thee down and write  
In a book, that all may read.”  
So he vanished from my sight ;  
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,  
And I stained the water clear,  
And I wrote my happy songs  
Every child may joy to hear.

BLAKE.

A Carol



HE came all so still  
Where His mother was  
As dew in Aprill  
That falleth on the grass.

He came all so still  
Where His mother lay,  
As dew in Aprill  
That falleth on the spray.

He came all so still  
To His mother's bower  
As dew in Aprill  
That falleth on the flower.

Mother and maiden  
Was never none but she!  
Well might such a lady  
God's mother be.

ANONYMOUS.

LITTLE lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee,  
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed  
By the stream and o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight,  
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;  
Gave thee such a tender voice,  
Making all the vales rejoice?

Little lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;  
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:  
He is callèd by thy name,  
For He calls Himself a Lamb.  
He is meek, and He is mild,  
He became a little child.  
I a child and thou a lamb,  
We are callèd by His name.

Little lamb, God bless thee!

Little lamb, God bless thee!

BLAKE.

It is a Beauteous Evening    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

IT is a beauteous evening, calm and free ;  
The holy time is quiet as a nun  
Breathless with adoration ; the broad sun  
Is sinking down in his tranquillity ;  
The gentleness of heaven is on the sea :  
Listen ! the mighty Being is awake,  
And doth with his eternal motion make  
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.  
Dear child ! dear girl ! that walkest with me here,  
If thou appear'st untouched by solemn thought,  
Thy nature is not therefore less divine :  
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year ;  
And worshipp'st at the temple's inner shrine,  
God being with thee when we know it not.

WORDSWORTH.

Pippa Passes    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

NEW YEAR'S DAY AT ASOLO IN THE TREVISAN.

SCENE.—*A large, mean, airy chamber. A girl, PIPPA,  
from the silk-mills, springing out of bed.*

DAY !  
Faster and more fast,  
O'er night's brim, day boils at last ;

Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim  
Where spurting and supprest it lay—  
For not a froth-flake touched the rim  
Of yonder gap in the solid grey  
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away ;  
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,  
Till the whole sunrise, not to be supprest,  
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast  
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed  
the world.

Oh, Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,  
A mite of my twelve-hours' treasure,  
The least of thy gazes or glances,  
(Be they grants thou art bound to, or gifts above  
measure)  
One of thy choices, or one of thy chances,  
(Be they tasks God imposed thee, or freaks at thy  
pleasure)  
—My Day, if I squander such labour or leisure,  
Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me !

Thy long blue solemn hours serenely flowing,  
Whence earth, we feel, gets steady help and good—  
Thy fitful sunshine minutes, coming, going,  
In which, earth turns from work in gamesome  
mood—

All shall be mine! But thou must treat me  
not

As the prosperous are treated, those who live  
At hand here, and enjoy the higher lot,  
In readiness to take what thou wilt give,  
And free to let alone what thou refusest ;  
For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-usest  
Me, who am only Pippa—old-year's sorrow,  
Cast off last night, will come again to-morrow—  
Whereas, if thou prove gentle, I shall borrow  
Sufficient strength of thee for new-year's sorrow.  
All other men and women that this earth  
Belongs to, who all days alike possess,  
Make general plenty cure particular dearth,  
Get more joy, one way, if another, less :  
Thou art my single day, God lends to leaven  
What were all earth else, with a feel of heaven ;  
Sole light that helps me through the year, thy  
sun's !

Try, now ! Take Asolo's Four Happiest Ones—  
And let thy morning rain on that superb  
Great haughty Ottima ; can rain disturb  
Her Sebald's homage ? All the while thy rain  
Beats fiercest on her shrub-house window-pane,  
He will but press the closer, breathe more warm  
Against her cheek ; how should she mind the  
storm ?

And, morning past, if mid-day shed a gloom  
O'er Jules and Phene, — what care bride and  
groom  
Save for their dear selves? 'Tis their marriage-  
day;  
And while they leave church, and go home their  
way  
Hand clasping hand,—within each breast would  
be  
Sunbeams and pleasant weather spite of thee!  
Then, for another trial, obscure thy eve  
With mist,—will Luigi and his mother grieve—  
The Lady and her child, unmatched, forsooth,  
She in her age, as Luigi in his youth,  
For true content? The cheerful town, warm,  
close,  
And safe, the sooner that thou art morose  
Receives them! And yet once again, outbreak  
In storm at night on Monsignor, they make  
Such stir about,—whom they expect from Rome  
To visit Asolo, his brothers' home,  
And say here masses proper to release  
A soul from pain,—what storm dares hurt his  
peace?  
Calm would he pray, with his own thoughts to  
ward  
Thy thunder off, nor want the angels' guard!

But Pippa—just one such mischance would spoil  
Her day that lightens the next twelvemonth's toil  
At wearisome silk-winding, coil on coil!  
And here I let time slip for nought!  
Aha,—you foolhardy sunbeam—caught  
With a single splash from my ewer!  
You that would mock the best pursuer,  
Was my basin over-deep?  
One splash of water ruins you asleep,  
And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits  
Wheeling and counterwheeling,  
Reeling, broken beyond healing—  
Now grow together on the ceiling!  
That will task your wits!  
Whoever quenched fire first, hoped to see  
Morsel after morsel flee  
As merrily, as giddily . . .  
Meantime, what lights my sunbeam on,  
Where settles by degrees the radiant cripple?  
Oh, is it surely blown, my martagon?  
New-blown and ruddy as St. Agnes' nipple,  
Plump as the flesh-bunch on some Turk bird's  
poll!  
Be sure if corals, branching 'neath the ripple  
Of ocean, bud there,—fairies watch unroll  
Such turban-flowers; I say, such lamps disperse  
Thick red flame through that dusk green universe!



I am queen of thee, floweret ;  
And each fleshy blossom  
Preserve I not—(safer  
Than leaves that embower it,  
Or shells that embosom)  
—From weevil and chafer ?  
Laugh through my pane, then ; solicit the bee ;  
Gibe him, be sure ; and, in midst of thy glee,  
Love thy queen, worship me !

—Worship whom else ? For am I not, this day,  
Whate'er I please ? What shall I please to-day ?  
My morning, noon, eve, night—how spend my  
day ?

To-morrow I must be Pippa who winds silk,  
The whole year round, to earn just bread and  
milk :

But, this one day, I have leave to go,  
And play out my fancy's fullest games ;  
I may fancy all day—and it shall be so—  
That I taste of the pleasures, am called by the  
names

Of the Happiest Four in our Asolo !

See ! Up the Hill-side yonder, through the  
morning,  
Some one shall love me, as the world calls love :

I am no less than Ottima, take warning !  
The gardens, and the great stone house above,  
And other house for shrubs, all glass in front,  
Are mine ; where Sebald steals, as he is wont,  
To court me, while old Luca yet reposes ;  
And therefore, till the shrub-house door uncloses,  
I . . . what, now ? — give abundant cause for  
prate

About me—Ottima, I mean—of late,  
Too bold, too confident she'll still face down  
The spitefullest of talkers in our town—  
How we talk in the little town below !  
But love, love, love — there's better love, I  
know !

This foolish love was only day's first offer ;  
I choose my next love to defy the scoffer :  
For do not our Bride and Bridegroom sally  
Out of Possagno church at noon ?  
Their house looks over Orcana valley—  
Why should I not be the bride as soon  
As Ottima ? For I saw, beside,  
Arrive last night that little bride—  
Saw, if you call it seeing her, one flash  
Of the pale, snow-pure cheek and black bright  
tresses,  
Blacker than all except the black eyelash ;  
I wonder she contrives those lids no dresses !

—So strict was she, the veil  
Should cover close her pale  
Pure cheeks—a bride to look at and scarce  
touch,  
Scarce touch, remember, Jules!—for are not  
such  
Used to be tended, flower-like, every feature,  
As if one's breath would fray the lily of a creature?  
A soft and easy life these ladies lead!  
Whiteness in us were wonderful indeed—  
Oh, save that brow its virgin dimness,  
Keep that foot its lady primness,  
Let those ancles never swerve  
From their exquisite reserve,  
Yet have to trip along the streets like me,  
All but naked to the knee!  
How will she ever grant her Jules a bliss  
So startling as her real first infant kiss?  
Oh, no—not envy, this!

—Not envy, sure!—for if you gave me  
Leave to take or to refuse,  
In earnest, do you think I'd choose  
That sort of new love to enslave me?  
Mine should have lapped me round from the  
beginning;  
As little fear of losing it as winning!

Lovers grow cold, men learn to hate their  
wives,

And only parents' love can last our lives :

At eve the son and mother, gentle pair,

Commune inside our Turret ; what prevents

My being Luigi ? while that mossy lair

Of lizards through the winter-time, is stirred

With each to each imparting sweet intents

For this new-year, as brooding bird to bird—

(For I observe of late, the evening walk

Of Luigi and his mother, always ends

Inside our ruined turret, where they talk,

Calmer than lovers, yet more kind than friends)

Let me be cared about, kept out of harm,

And schemed for, safe in love as with a charm ;

Let me be Luigi ! . . . If I only knew

What was my mother's face—my father, too !

Nay, if you come to that, best love of all

Is God's ; then why not have God's love befall

Myself as, in the Palace by the Dome,

Monsignor ?—who to-night will bless the home

Of his dead brother ; and God will bless in

turn

That heart which beats, those eyes which mildly

burn

With love for all men : I, to-night at least,

Would be that holy and beloved priest !

Now wait!—even I already seem to share  
In God's love: what does New-year's hymn  
declare?

What other meaning do these verses bear?

*All service ranks the same with God :  
If now, as formerly He trod  
Paradise, His presence fills  
Our earth, each only as God wills  
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,  
Are we ; there is no last nor first.*

*Say not “ a small event ! ” Why “ small ” ?  
Costs it more pain that this, ye call  
A “ great event,” should come to pass,  
Than that ? Untwine me from the mass,  
Of deeds which make up life, one deed  
Power shall fall short in, or exceed !*

And more of it, and more of it!—oh, yes—  
I will pass by, and see their happiness,  
And envy none—being just as great, no doubt,  
Useful to men, and dear to God, as they!  
A pretty thing to care about  
So mightily, this single holiday!  
But let the sun shine! Wherefore repine?  
—With thee to lead me, O Day of mine,  
Down the grass-path grey with dew,

Under the pine-wood, blind with boughs,  
Where the swallow never flew  
As yet, nor cicale dared carouse—  
Dared carouse !

[*She enters the street.*]

I.—MORNING. *Up the Hill-side, inside the Shrub-house. LUCA'S Wife, OTTIMA, and her Par-amour, the German SEBALD.*

*Sebald (sings).*

*Let the watching lids wink !  
Day's a-blaze with eyes, think—  
Deep into the night, drink !*

*Ottima.* Night ? Such may be your Rhine-land  
nights, perhaps ;  
But this blood-red beam through the shutter's  
chink,  
—We call such light, the morning's : let us see !  
Mind how you grope your way, though ! How  
these tall  
Naked geraniums straggle ! Push the lattice—  
Behind that frame !—Nay, do I bid you ?—Sebald,  
It shakes the dust down on me ! Why, of  
course  
The slide-bolt catches.—Well, are you content,  
Or must I find you something else to spoil ?

Kiss and be friends, my Sebald ! Is it full  
morning ?

Oh, don't speak then !

*Sebald.*

Ay, thus it used to be !

Ever your house was, I remember, shut  
Till mid-day—I observed that, as I strolled  
On mornings thro' the vale here : country girls  
Were noisy, washing garments in the brook—  
Hinds drove the slow white oxen up the hills—  
But no, your house was mute, would ope no  
eye—

And wisely—you were plotting one thing there,  
Nature, another outside : I looked up—  
Rough white wood shutters, rusty iron bars,  
Silent as death, blind in a flood of light ;  
Oh, I remember !—and the peasants laughed  
And said, “ The old man sleeps with the young  
wife ! ”

This house was his, this chair, this window—his !

*Ottima.* Ah, the clear morning ! I can see St.  
Mark's :

That black streak is the belfry. Stop : Vicenza  
Should lie . . . There's Padua, plain enough, that  
blue !

Look o'er my shoulder—follow my finger—

*Sebald.*

Morning ?

It seems to me a night with a sun added :

Where's dew? where's freshness? That bruised  
plant, I bruised

In getting thro' the lattice yestereve,  
Droops as it did. See, here's my elbow's mark  
In the dust on the sill.

*Ottima.* Oh, shut the lattice, pray!

*Sebald.* Let me lean out. I cannot scent blood  
here,

Foul as the morn may be—

There, shut the world out!

How do you feel now, *Ottima*? There—curse  
The world, and all outside! Let us throw off  
This mask: how do you bear yourself? Let's  
out

With all of it!

*Ottima.* Best never speak of it.

*Sebald.* Best speak again and yet again of it,  
Till words cease to be more than words. "His  
blood,"

For instance—let those two words mean "His  
blood"

And nothing more. Notice—I'll say them now,  
"His blood."

*Ottima.* Assuredly if I repented  
The deed—

*Sebald.* Repent? who should repent, or why?  
What puts that in your head? Did I once say



That I repented ?

*Ottima.* No—I said the deed—

*Sebald.* “The deed,” and “the event,”—just  
now it was

“Our passion’s fruit”—the devil take such cant !

Say, once and always, Luca was a wittol,

I am his cut-throat, you are—

*Ottima.*

Here is the wine—

I brought it when we left the house above—

And glasses too—wine of both sorts. Black ?  
white, then ?

*Sebald.* But am not I his cut-throat ? What  
are you ?

*Ottima.* There, trudges on his business from the  
Duomo

Benet the Capuchin, with his brown hood

And bare feet—always in one place at church,

Close under the stone wall by the south entry ;

I used to take him for a brown cold piece

Of the wall’s self, as out of it he rose

To let me pass—at first, I say, I used—

Now—so has that dumb figure fastened on me—

I rather should account the plastered wall

A piece of him, so chilly does it strike.

This, Sebald ?

*Sebald.* No—the white wine—the white wine !

Well, *Ottima*, I promised no new year

Should rise on us the ancient shameful way,  
Nor does it rise : pour on ! To your black eyes !  
Do you remember last damned New Year's day ?

*Ottima.* You brought those foreign prints. We  
looked at them

Over the wine and fruit. I had to scheme  
To get him from the fire. Nothing but saying  
His own set wants the proof-mark, roused him up  
To hunt them out.

*Sebald.* 'Faith, he is not alive  
To fondle you before my face !

*Ottima.* Do you  
Fondle me, then ! who means to take your life  
For that, my Sebald ?

*Sebald.* Hark you, Ottima,  
One thing's to guard against. We'll not make  
much

One of the other—that is, not make more  
Parade of warmth, childish officious coil,  
Than yesterday—as if, sweet, I supposed  
Proof upon proof was needed now, now first,  
To show I love you—yes, still love you—love you  
In spite of Luca and what's come to him  
—Sure sign we had him ever in our thoughts,  
White sneering old reproachful face and all !  
We'll even quarrel, love, at times, as if  
We still could lose each other—were not tied

By this—conceive you ?

*Ottima.*

Love—

*Sebald.*

Not tied so sure—

Because tho' I was wrought upon—have struck  
His insolence back into him—am I

So surely yours ?—therefore, forever yours ?

*Ottima.* Love, to be wise, (one counsel pays  
another)

Should we have—months ago—when first we  
loved,

For instance that May morning we two stole  
Under the green ascent of sycamores—

If we had come upon a thing like that

Suddenly—

*Sebald.* “A thing” . . . there again—“a  
thing !”

*Ottima.* Then, Venus' body, had we come upon  
My husband Luca Gaddi's murdered corpse  
Within there, at his couch-foot, covered close—  
Would you have pored upon it ? Why persist  
In poring now upon it ? For 'tis here—  
As much as there in the deserted house—  
You cannot rid your eyes of it : for me,  
Now he is dead I hate him worse—I hate—  
Dare you stay here ? I would go back and hold  
His two dead hands, and say, I hate you worse  
Luca, than—

*Sebald.* Off, off; take your hands off mine!  
'Tis the hot evening—off! oh, morning, is it?

*Ottima.* There's one thing must be done—you  
know what thing.

Come in and help to carry. We may sleep  
Anywhere in the whole wide house to-night.

*Sebald.* What would come, think you, if we let  
him lie  
Just as he is? Let him lie there until  
The angels take him: he is turned by this  
Off from his face, beside, as you will see.

*Ottima.* This dusty pane might serve for look-  
ing-glass.

Three, four—four grey hairs! Is it so you said  
A plait of hair should wave across my neck?  
No—this way!

*Sebald.* Ottima, I would give your neck,  
Each splendid shoulder, both those breasts of  
yours,  
That this were undone! Killing?—Kill the  
world

So Luca lives again!—Ay, lives to sputter  
His fulsome dotage on you—yes, and feign  
Surprise that I returned at eve to sup,  
When all the morning I was loitering here—  
Bid me dispatch my business and begone.  
I would—

*Ottima.* See!

*Sebald.* No, I'll finish! Do you think  
I fear to speak the bare truth once for all?  
All we have talked of is, at bottom, fine  
To suffer—there's a recompense in guilt;  
One must be venturous and fortunate—  
What is one young for, else? In age we'll sigh  
O'er the wild, reckless, wicked days flown over;  
Still we have lived! The vice was in its place.  
But to have eaten Luca's bread, have worn  
His clothes, have felt his money swell my purse—  
Do lovers in romances sin that way?  
Why, I was starving when I used to call  
And teach you music—starving while you plucked  
me  
These flowers to smell!

*Ottima.* My poor lost friend!

*Sebald.* He gave me  
Life—nothing less: what if he did reproach  
My perfidy, and threaten, and do more—  
Had he no right? What was to wonder at?  
He sate by us at table quietly—  
Why must you lean across till our cheeks touch'd?  
Could he do less than make pretence to strike  
me?  
'Tis not for the crime's sake—I'd commit ten  
crimes

Greater to have this crime wiped out—undone !  
And you—O, how feel you ? feel you for me ?

*Ottima.* Well, then—I love you better now than  
ever—

And best (look at me while I speak to you)—  
Best for the crime—nor do I grieve, in truth,  
This mask, this simulated ignorance,  
This affectation of simplicity,  
Falls off our crime ; this naked crime of ours  
May not, now, be looked over—look it down,  
then !

Great ? let it be great—but the joys it brought,  
Pay they or no its price ? Come—they or it !  
Speak not ! The past, would you give up the past  
Such as it is, pleasure and crime together ?  
Give up that noon I owned my love for you—  
The garden's silence—even the single bee  
Persisting in his toil, suddenly stopt  
And where he hid you only could surmise  
By some campanula's chalice set a-swing  
As he clung there—"Yes, I love you !"

*Sebald.*

And I drew  
Back ; put far back your face with both my hands  
Lest you should grow too full of me—your face  
So seemed athirst for my whole soul and body !

*Ottima.* And when I ventured to receive you  
here,

Made you steal hither in the mornings—

*Sebald.* When

I used to look up 'neath the shrub-house here,  
Till the red fire on its glazed windows spread  
To a yellow haze?

*Ottima.* Ah—my sign was, the sun  
Inflamed the sere side of yon chestnut tree  
Nipt by the first frost.

*Sebald.* You would always laugh  
At my wet boots—I had to stride thro' grass  
Over my ancles.

*Ottima.* Then our crowning night—

*Sebald.* The July night?

*Ottima.* The day of it too, Sebald!  
When the heaven's pillars seemed o'erbowed with  
heat,

Its black-blue canopy seemed let descend  
Close on us both, to weigh down each to each,  
And smother up all life except our life.  
So lay we till the storm came.

*Sebald.* How it came!

*Ottima.* Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;  
Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;  
And ever and anon some bright white shaft  
Burnt thro' the pine-tree roof—here burnt and  
there,  
As if God's messenger thro' the close wood screen

Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,  
Feeling for guilty thee and me : then broke  
The thunder like a whole sea overhead—

*Sebald.* Yes!

*Ottima.* —While I stretched myself upon  
you, hands

To hands, my mouth to your hot mouth, and shook  
All my locks loose, and covered you with them—  
You, Sebald, the same you—

*Sebald.* Slower, *Ottima*—

*Ottima.* And as we lay—

*Sebald.* Less vehemently! Love me—  
Forgive me—take not words—mere words—to  
heart—

Your breath is worse than wine! Breathe slow,  
speak slow—

Do not lean on me—

*Ottima.* Sebald as we lay,  
Rising and falling only with our pants,  
Who said, “ Let death come now—’tis right to die !  
Right to be punished—nought completes such  
bliss

But woe ! ” Who said that ?

*Sebald.* How did we ever rise ?  
Was’t that we slept ? Why did it end ?

*Ottima.* I felt you,  
Fresh tapering to a point the ruffled ends



Of my loose locks 'twixt both your humid lips—  
(My hair is fallen now—knot it again!)

*Sebald.* I kiss you now, dear *Ottima*, now, and now!  
This way? Will you forgive me—be once more  
My great Queen?

*Ottima.* Bind it thrice about my brow;  
Crown me your queen, your spirit's arbitress,  
Magnificent in sin. Say that!

*Sebald.* I crown you  
My great white queen, my spirit's arbitress,  
Magnificent—

[*From without is heard the voice of PIPPA,*  
*singing—*

*The year's at the spring,  
And day's at the morn;  
Morning's at seven;  
The hill-side's dew-pearled;  
The lark's on the wing;  
The snail's on the thorn;  
God's in His heaven—  
All's right with the world!*

[*PIPPA passes.*

*Sebald.* God's in His heaven? Do you hear  
that? Who spoke?

You, you spoke!

*Ottima.* Oh—that little ragged girl!

She must have rested on the step—we give them  
But this one holiday the whole year round.  
Did you ever see our silk-mills—their inside?  
There are ten silk-milks now belong to you.  
She stoops to pick my double heartsease . . . Sh!  
She does not hear—you call out louder!

*Sebald.*

Leave me!

Go, get your clothes on—dress those shoulders!

*Ottima.*

Sebald?

*Sebald.* Wipe off that paint. I hate you!

*Ottima.*

Miserable!

*Sebald.* My God! and she is emptied of it now!  
Outright now!—how miraculously gone  
All of the grace—had she not strange grace  
once?

Why, the blank cheek hangs listless as it likes,  
No purpose holds the features up together,  
Only the cloven brow and puckered chin  
Stay in their places—and the very hair,  
That seemed to have a sort of life in it,  
Drops, a dead web!

*Ottima.* Speak to me—speak not of me!

*Sebald.* —That round great full-orbed face,  
where not an angle

Broke the delicious indolence—all broken!

*Ottima.* To me—not of me!—ungrateful, per-  
jured cheat—

A coward, too—but ingrate's worse than all!  
Beggar—my slave—a fawning, cringing lie!  
Leave me!—betray me!—I can see your drift—  
A lie that walks, and eats, and drinks!

*Sebald.*

My God!

Those morbid, olive, faultless shoulder-blades—  
I should have known there was no blood beneath!

*Ottima.* You hate me, then? You hate me,  
then?

*Sebald.*

To think

She would succeed in her absurd attempt,  
And fascinate by sinning; and show herself  
Superior—Guilt from its excess, superior  
To Innocence. That little peasant's voice  
Has righted all again. Though I be lost,  
I know which is the better, never fear,  
Of vice or virtue, purity or lust,  
Nature, or trick—I see what I have done,  
Entirely now! Oh, I am proud to feel  
Such torments—let the world take credit thence—  
I, having done my deed, pay too its price!  
I hate, hate—curse you! God's in His heaven!

*Ottima.*

—Me!

Me! no, no, Sebald—not yourself—kill me!  
Mine is the whole crime—do but kill me—then  
Yourself—then—presently—first hear me speak—  
I always meant to kill myself—wait, you!

Lean on my breast—not as a breast ; don't love  
me

The more because you lean on me, my own  
Heart's Sebald ! There—there—both deaths  
presently !

*Sebald.* My brain is drowned now — quite  
drowned : all I feel

Is . . . is at swift-recurring intervals,  
A hurrying-down within me, as of waters  
Loosened to smother up some ghastly pit—  
There they go—whirls from a black, fiery sea !

*Ottima.* Not to me, God—to him be merciful !

*Talk by the way, while PIPPA is passing from the  
Hill-side to Orcana. Foreign Students of paint-  
ing and sculpture, from Venice, assembled op-  
posite the house of JULES, a young French  
statuary.*

*1st Student.* Attention ! my own post is beneath  
this window, but the pomegranate clump yonder  
will hide three or four of you with a little  
squeezing, and Schramm and his pipe must lie  
flat in the balcony. Four, five—who's a de-  
faulter ? We want everybody, for Jules must  
not be suffered to hurt his bride when the jest's  
found out.

*2nd Student.* All here! Only our poet's away—never having much meant to be present, moonstrike him! The airs of that fellow, that Giovacchino! He was in violent love with himself, and had a fair prospect of thriving in his suit, so unmolested was it,—when suddenly a woman falls in love with him, too; and out of pure jealousy he takes himself off to Trieste, immortal poem and all—whereto is this prophetic epitaph appended already, as Bluphocks assures me—“*Here a mammoth-poem lies,—Fouled to death by butterflies.*” His own fault, the simpleton! Instead of cramp couplets, each like a knife in your entrails, he should write, says Bluphocks, both classically and intelligibly.—*Æsculapius, an Epic. Catalogue of the drugs: Hebe's plaister—One strip Cools your lip. Phæbus' emulsion—One bottle Clears your throttle. Mercury's bolus—One box Cures. . . .*

*3rd Student.* Subside, my fine fellow! If the marriage was over by ten o'clock, Jules will certainly be here in a minute with his bride.

*2nd Student.* Good!—Only, so should the poet's muse have been universally acceptable, says Bluphocks, *et canibus nostris* . . . and Delia not better known to our literary dogs than the boy—Giovacchino!

*1st Student.* To the point, now. Where's Gottlieb, the new-comer? Oh,—listen, Gottlieb, to what has called down this piece of friendly vengeance on Jules, of which we now assemble to witness the winding-up. We are all agreed, all in a tale, observe, when Jules shall burst out on us in a fury by and by: I am spokesman—the verses that are to undeceive Jules bear my name of Lutwyche—but each professes himself alike insulted by this strutting stone-squarer, who came singly from Paris to Munich, and thence with a crowd of us to Venice and Possagno here, but proceeds in a day or two alone again—oh, alone, indubitably!—to Rome and Florence. He, forsooth, take up his portion with these dissolute, brutalised, heartless bunglers!—So he was heard to call us all: now is Schramm brutalised, I should like to know? Am I heartless?

*Gottlieb.* Why, somewhat heartless; for, suppose Jules a coxcomb as much as you choose, still, for this mere coxcombry, you will have brushed off—what do folks style it?—the bloom of his life. Is it too late to alter? These love-letters, now, you call his . . . I can't laugh at them.

*4th Student.* Because you never read the sham letters of our inditing which drew forth these.

*Gottlieb.* His discovery of the truth will be frightful.

*4th Student.* That's the joke. But you should have joined us at the beginning: there's no doubt he loves the girl—loves a model he might hire by the hour!

*Gottlieb.* See here! "He has been accustomed," he writes, "to have Canova's women about him, in stone, and the world's women beside him, in flesh; these being as much below, as those, above—his soul's aspiration: but now he is to have the real." . . . There you laugh again! I say, you wipe off the very dew of his youth.

*1st Student.* Schramm!—(Take the pipe out of his mouth, somebody)—Will Jules lose the bloom of his youth?

*Schramm.* Nothing worth keeping is ever lost in this world: look at a blossom—it drops presently, having done its service and lasted its time; but fruits succeed, and where would be the blossom's place could it continue? As well affirm that your eye is no longer in your body, because its earliest favourite, whatever it may have first loved to look on, is dead and done with—as that any affection is lost to the soul when its first object, whatever happened first

to satisfy it, is superseded in due course. Keep but ever looking, whether with the body's eye or the mind's, and you will soon find something to look on! Has a man done wondering at women?—There follow men, dead and alive, to wonder at. Has he done wondering at men?—There's God to wonder at: and the faculty of wonder may be, at the same time, old and tired enough with respect to its first object, and yet young and fresh sufficiently, so far as concerns its novel one. Thus. . . .

1st Student. Put Schramm's pipe into his mouth again! There, you see! Well, this—Jules . . . a wretched fribble—oh, I watched his disportings at Possagno, the other day! Canova's gallery—you know: there he marches first resolvedly past great works by the dozen without vouchsafing an eye: all at once he stops full at the *Psiche-fanciulla*—cannot pass that old acquaintance without a nod of encouragement—"In your new place, beauty? Then behave yourself as well here as at Munich—I see you!" Next he posts himself deliberately before the unfinished *Pietà* for half an hour without moving, till up he starts of a sudden, and thrusts his very nose 'into—I say, into—the group; by which gesture you are informed that precisely the sole point he had



not fully mastered in Canova's practice was a certain method of using the drill in the articulation of the knee-joint—and that, likewise, has he mastered at length! Good-bye, therefore, to poor Canova—whose gallery no longer need detain his successor Jules, the predestinated novel thinker in marble!

*5th Student.* Tell him about the women—go on to the women!

*1st Student.* Why, on that matter he could never be supercilious enough. How should we be other (he said) than the poor devils you see, with those debasing habits we cherish? He was not to wallow in that mire, at least: he would wait, and love only at the proper time, and meanwhile put up with the *Psiche-fanciulla*. Now I happened to hear of a young Greek—real Greek—girl at Malamocco; a true Islander, do you see, with Alciphron's "hair like sea-moss"—Schramm knows!—white and quiet as an apparition, and fourteen years old at farthest,—a daughter of Natalia, so she swears—that hag Natalia, who helps us to models at three *lire* an hour. We selected this girl for the heroine of our jest. So, first, Jules received a scented letter—somebody had seen his Tydeus at the academy, and my picture was nothing to it—a profound admirer

bade him persevere—would make herself known to him ere long—(Paolina, my little friend of the *Fenice*, transcribes divinely). And in due time, the mysterious correspondent gave certain hints of her peculiar charms—the pale cheeks, the black hair—whatever, in short, had struck us in our Malamocco model: we retained her name, too—Phene, which is by interpretation, sea eagle. Now, think of Jules finding himself distinguished from the herd of us by such a creature! In his very first answer he proposed marrying his monitress: and fancy us over these letters, two, three times a day, to receive and dispatch! I concocted the main of it: relations were in the way—secrecy must be observed—in fine, would he wed her on trust, and only speak to her when they were indissolubly united? St—st—Here they come!

*6th Student.* Both of them! Heaven's love, speak softly! speak within yourselves!

*5th Student.* Look at the bridegroom! Half his hair in storm, and half in calm,—patted down over the left temple,—like a frothy cup one blows on to cool it! and the same old blouse that he murders the marble in!

*2nd Student.* Not a rich vest like yours, Hannibal Scratchy!—rich, that your face may the better set it off!

*6th Student.* And the bride! Yes, sure enough, our Phene! Should you have known her in her clothes? How magnificently pale!

*Gottlieb.* She does not also take it for earnest, I hope?

*1st Student.* Oh, Natalia's concern, that is! We settle with Natalia.

*6th Student.* She does not speak—has evidently let out no word. The only thing is, will she equally remember the rest of her lesson, and repeat correctly all those verses which are to break the secret to Jules?

*Gottlieb.* How he gazes on her! Pity—pity!

*1st Student.* They go in—now, silence! You three,—not nearer the window, mind, than that pomegranate—just where the little girl, who a few minutes ago passed us singing, is seated!

II.—NOON. *Over Orcana. The house of JULES, who crosses its threshold with PHENE—she is silent, on which JULES begins—*

Do not die, Phene—I am yours now—you  
Are mine now—let fate reach me how she likes,  
If you'll not die—so, never die! Sit here—  
My workroom's single seat: I over-lean  
This length of hair and lustrous front—they turn

Like an entire flower upward—eyes—lips—last  
Your chin—no, last your throat turns—'tis their  
scent

Pulls down my face upon you! Nay, look ever  
This one way till I change, grow you—I could  
Change into you, beloved!

You by me,  
And I by you—this is your hand in mine—  
And side by side we sit: all's true. Thank God!  
I have spoken—speak, you!

—O, my life to come!  
My Tydeus must be carved, that's there in clay;  
Yet how be carved, with you about the chamber?  
Where must I place you? When I think that  
once  
This room-full of rough block-work seemed my  
heaven

Without you! Shall I ever work again—  
Get fairly into my old ways again—  
Bid each conception stand while, trait by trait,  
My hand transfers its lineaments to stone?  
Will my mere fancies live near you, my truth—  
The live truth—passing and repassing me—  
Sitting beside me?

Now speak!

Only, first,  
See, all your letters! Was't not well contrived?

Their hiding-place is Psyche's robe ; she keeps  
Your letters next her skin : which drops out  
foremost ?

Ah,—this that swam down like a first moonbeam  
Into my world !

Again those eyes complete  
Their melancholy survey, sweet and slow,  
Of all my room holds ; to return and rest  
On me, with pity, yet some wonder too—  
As if God bade some spirit plague a world,  
And this were the one moment of surprise  
And sorrow while she took her station, pausing  
O'er what she sees, finds good, and must destroy !  
What gaze you at ? Those ? Books, I told you  
of ;

Let your first word to me rejoice them, too :  
This minion, a Coluthus, writ in red  
Bistre and azure by Bessarion's scribe—  
Read this line . . . no, shame—Homer's be the  
Greek

First breathed me from the lips of my Greek girl  
My Odyssey in coarse black vivid type  
With faded yellow blossoms 'twixt page and page,  
To mark great places with true gratitude ;  
“ *He said, and on Antinous directed*  
“ *A bitter shaft* ” . . . a flower blots out the rest !  
Again upon your search ? My statues, then !

—Ah, do not mind that—better that will look  
When cast in bronze—an Almain Kaiser, that,  
Swart-green and gold, with truncheon based on  
hip.

This, rather, turn to ! What, unrecognised ?  
I thought you would have seen that here you sit  
As I imagined you,—Hippolyta,  
Naked upon her bright Numidian horse !  
Recall you this, then ? “Carve in bold relief”—  
So you commanded—“carve, against I come,  
“A Greek, in Athens, as our fashion was,  
“Feasting, bay-filleted and thunder-free,  
“Who rises ’neath the lifted myrtle-branch :  
“‘*Praise those who slew Hipparchus,*’ cry the  
guests,  
“‘*While o’er thy head the singer’s myrtle waves*  
“‘*As erst above our champions’ : stand up, all !*’ ”  
See, I have laboured to express your thought !  
Quite round, a cluster of mere hands and arms,  
(Thrust in all senses, all ways, from all sides,  
Only consenting at the branches’ end  
They strain toward) serves for frame to a sole  
face—

The Praiser’s—in the centre—who with eyes  
Sightless, so bend they back to light inside  
His brain where visionary forms throng up,  
Sings, minding not that palpitating arch

Of hands and arms, nor the quick drip of wine  
From the drenched leaves o'erhead, nor crowns  
cast off,  
Violet and parsley crowns to trample on—  
Sings, pausing as the patron-ghosts approve,  
Devoutly their unconquerable hymn !  
But you must say a " well " to that—say, " well ! " "  
Because you gaze—am I fantastic, sweet ?  
Gaze like my very life's-stuff, marble—marbly  
Even to the silence ! why before I found  
The real flesh Phene, I inured myself  
To see, throughout all nature, varied stuff  
For better nature's birth by means of art :  
With me, each substance tended to one form  
Of beauty—to the human Archetype—  
On every side occurred suggestive germs  
Of that—the tree, the flower—or take the fruit—  
Some rosy shape, continuing the peach,  
Curved beewise o'er it's bough ; as rosy limbs,  
Depending, nestled in the leaves—and just  
From a cleft rose-peach the whole Dryad sprang :  
But of the stuffs one can be master of,  
How I divined their capabilities !  
From the soft-rinded smoothening facile chalk  
That yields your outline to the air's embrace,  
Half-softened by a halo's pearly gloom ;  
Down to the crisp imperious steel, so sure

To cut its one confided thought clean out  
Of all the world : but marble !—'neath my tools  
More pliable than jelly—as it were  
Some clear primordial creature dug from depths  
In the Earth's heart, where itself breeds itself,  
And whence all baser substance may be worked ;  
Refine it off to air, you may—condense it  
Down to the diamond ;—is not metal there,  
When o'er the sudden specks my chisel trips ?  
—Not flesh—as flake off flake I scale, approach,  
Lay bare those bluish veins of blood asleep ?  
Lurks flame in no strange windings where,  
          surprised  
By the swift implement sent home at once,  
Flushes and glowings radiate and hover  
About its track ?—

                                Phene ? what—why is this ?  
That whitening cheek, those still-dilating eyes !  
Ah, you will die—I knew that you would die !

*PHENE begins, on his having long remained silent.*

Now the end's coming—to be sure, it must  
Have ended sometime ! Tush—why need I speak  
Their foolish speech ? I cannot bring to mind  
One half of it, besides ; and do not care  
For old Natalia now, nor any of them.



Oh, you—what are you?—if I do not try  
To say the words Natalia made me learn,  
To please your friends,—it is to keep myself  
Where your voice lifted me, by letting it  
Proceed—but can it? Even you, perhaps,  
Cannot take up, now you have once let fall,  
The music's life, and me along with that—  
No, or you would! We'll stay, then, as we are  
—Above the world.

You creature with the eyes!

If I could look for ever up to them,  
As now you let me,—I believe, all sin,  
All memory of wrong done or suffering borne,  
Would drop down, low and lower, to the earth  
Whence all that's low comes, and there touch and  
    stay  
—Never to overtake the rest of me,  
All that, unspotted, reaches up to you,  
Drawn by those eyes! What rises is myself,  
Not so the shame and suffering; but they sink,  
Are left, I rise above them—Keep me so  
Above the world!

But you sink, for your eyes  
Are altering—altered! Stay—"I love you, love  
    you" . . .

I could prevent it if I understood  
More of your words to me—was't in the tone

Or the words, your power ?

Or stay—I will repeat  
Their speech, if that contents you! Only,  
change

No more, and I shall find it presently  
—Far back here, in the brain yourself filled up.  
Natalia threatened me that harm would follow  
Unless I spoke their lesson to the end,  
But harm to me, I thought she meant, not you.  
Your friends, — Natalia said they were your  
friends

And meant you well,—because I doubted it,  
Observing (what was very strange to see)  
On every face, so different in all else,  
The same smile girls like us are used to bear,  
But never men, men cannot stoop so low ;  
Yet your friends, speaking of you, used that smile,  
That hateful smirk of boundless self-conceit  
Which seems to take possession of this world  
And make of God their tame confederate,  
Purveyor to their appetites . . . you know !  
But no—Natalia said they were your friends,  
And they assented while they smiled the more.  
And all came round me,—that thin Englishman  
With light, lank hair seemed leader of the rest ;  
He held a paper—“What we want,” said he,  
Ending some explanation to his friends—

“ Is something slow, involved and mystical,  
“ To hold Jules long in doubt, yet take his taste  
“ And lure him on, so that, at innermost  
“ Where he seeks sweetness’ soul, he may find—  
this !

“ —As in the apple’s core, the noisome fly :  
“ For insects on the rind are seen at once,  
“ And brushed aside as soon, but this is found  
“ Only when on the lips or loathing tongue.”

And so he read what I have got by heart—  
I’ll speak it,—“ Do not die, love ! I am  
yours ” . . .

Stop—is not that, or like that, part of words  
Yourself began by speaking ? Strange to lose  
What costs much pains to learn ! Is this more  
right ?

*I am a painter who cannot paint ;  
In my life, a devil rather than saint.  
In my brain, as poor a creature too—  
No end to all I cannot do !  
Yet do one thing at least I can—  
Love a man, or hate a man  
Supremely : thus my love began.  
Through the Valley of Love I went,  
In its lovingest spot to abide,  
And just on the verge where I pitched my tent,*

*I found Hate dwelling beside.  
(Let the Bridegroom ask what the painter meant,  
Of his Bride, of the peerless Bride !)  
And further, I traversed Hate's grove,  
In its hatefullest nook to dwell ;  
But lo, where I flung myself prone, couched Love  
Where the deepest shadow fell.  
(The meaning—those black bride's-eyes above,  
Not the painter's lip should tell !)*

“ And here,” said he, “ Jules probably will ask,  
“ You have black eyes, love, — you are, sure  
    enough,  
“ My peerless bride,—so do you tell, indeed,  
“ What needs some explanation — what means  
    this ? ”  
—And I am to go on, without a word—

*So I grew wiser in Love and Hate,  
From simple, that I was of late.  
For once, when I loved, I would enlase  
Breast, eyelids, hands, feet, form and face  
Of her I loved, in one embrace—  
As if by mere love I could love immensely !  
And when I hated, I would plunge  
My sword, and wipe with the first lunge  
My foe's whole life out, like a sponge—  
As if by mere hate I could hate intensely !*

*But now I am wiser, know better the fashion  
How passion seeks aid from its opposite passion,  
And if I see cause to love more, or hate more  
That ever man loved, ever hated, before—  
And seek in the Valley of Love,  
The spot, or the spot in Hate's grove,  
Where my soul may the sureliest reach  
The essence, nought less, of each,  
The Hate of all Hates, or the Love  
Of all Loves, in its Valley or Grove,—  
I find them the very warders  
Each of the other's borders.  
I love most, when Love is disguised  
In Hate ; and when Hate is surprised  
In Love, then I hate most : ask  
How Love smiles through Hate's iron casque,  
Hate grins through Love's rose-braided mask,—  
And how, having hated thee,  
I sought long and painfully  
To wound thee, and not prick  
The skin, but pierce to the quick—  
Ask this, my Jules, and be answered straight  
By thy bride—how the painter Lutwyche can hate !*

JULES interposes.

Lutwyche—who else ? But all of them, no doubt,  
Hated me : they at Venice—presently

Their turn, however! You I shall not meet :  
If I dreamed, saying this would wake me!

Keep

What's here, this gold—we cannot meet again.  
Consider—and the money was but meant  
For two years' travel, which is over now,  
All chance, or hope, or care, or need of it!  
This—and what comes from selling these, my casts  
And books, and medals, except . . . let them go  
Together, so the produce keeps you safe  
Out of Natalia's clutches!—If by chance  
(For all's chance here) I should survive the gang  
At Venice, root out all fifteen of them,  
We might meet somewhere, since the world is  
wide—

[*From without is heard the voice of PIPPA,*  
*singing—*

*Give her but a least excuse to love me!*

*When—where—*

*How—can this arm establish her above me,*

*If fortune fixed her as my lady there,*

*There already, to eternally reprove me?*

*(“Hist”—said Kate the queen;*

*But “Oh—” cried the maiden, binding her tresses,*

*“’Tis only a page that carols unseen*

*“Crumbling your hounds their messes!”)*

*Is she wronged ?—To the rescue of her honour,  
My heart !*

*Is she poor ?—What costs it to be styled a donour ?*

*Merely an earth's to cleave, a sea's to part !*

*But that fortune should have thrust all this upon he*

*("Nay, list,"—bade Kate the queen ;*

*And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,*

*"'Tis only a page that carols unseen*

*"Fitting your hanks their jesses !")*

[PIPPA passes.

JULES resumes.

What name was that the little girl sang forth ?

Kate ? The Cornaro, doubtless, who renounced

The crown of Cyprus to be lady here

At Asolo, where still the peasants keep

Her memory ; and songs tell how many a page

Pined for the grace of one so far above

His power of doing good to, as a queen—

"She never could be wronged, be poor," he

sighed,

"For him to help her !"

Yes, a bitter thing

To see our lady above all need of us ;

Yet so we look ere we will love ; not I,

But the world looks so. If whoever loves

Must be, in some sort, god or worshipper,

The blessing or the blest one, queen or page,

Why should we always choose the page's part?  
Here is a woman with utter need of me,—  
I find myself queen here, it seems!

How strange!

Look at the woman here with the new soul,  
Like my own Psyche's,—fresh upon her lips  
Alit, the visionary butterfly,  
Waiting my word to enter and make bright,  
Or flutter off and leave all blank as first.  
This body had no soul before, but slept  
Or stirred, was beauteous or ungainly, free  
From taint or foul with stain, as outward things  
Fastened their image on its passiveness:  
Now, it will wake, feel, live—or die again!  
Shall to produce form out of unshaped stuff  
Be art—and, further, to evoke a soul  
From form, be nothing? This new soul is mine!

Now, to kill Lutwyche, what would that do?—save  
A wretched dauber, men will hoot to death  
Without me, from their laughter!—Oh, to hear  
God's voice plain as I heard it first, before  
They broke in with that laughter! I heard them  
Henceforth, not God!

To Ancona—Greece—some isle!

I wanted silence only—there is clay  
Everywhere. One may do whate'er one likes



In Art—the only thing is, to make sure  
That one does like it—which takes pains to know.

Scatter all this, my Phene—this mad dream !  
Who—what is Lutwyche—what Natalia's friends,  
What the whole world except our love—my own,  
Own Phene ? But I told you, did I not,  
Ere night we travel for your land—some isle  
With the sea's silence on it ? Stand aside—  
I do but break these paltry models up  
To begin art afresh. Shall I meet Lutwyche,  
And save him from my statue's meeting him ?  
Some unsuspected isle in the far seas !  
Like a god going thro' his world there stands  
One mountain for a moment in the dusk,  
Whole brotherhoods of cedars on its brow—  
And you are ever by me while I gaze  
—Are in my arms as now—as now—as now !  
Some unsuspected isle in the far seas !  
Some unsuspected isle in far off seas !

*Talk by the way, while PIPPA is passing from Orcana  
to the Turret. Two or three of the Austrian  
Police loitering with BLUPHOCKS, an English  
vagabond, just in view of the Turret.*

*Bluphocks.*<sup>1</sup> So, that is your Pippa, the little

<sup>1</sup> “ He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good,  
and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

girl who passed us singing? Well, your Bishop's Intendant's money shall be honestly earned:—now, don't make me that sour face because I bring the Bishop's name into the business—we know he can have nothing to do with such horrors—we know that he is a saint and all that a Bishop should be, who is a great man besides. *Oh! were but every worm a maggot, Every fly a grig, Every bough a Christmas faggot, Every tune a jig!* In fact, I have abjured all religions; but the last I inclined to, was the Armenian—for I have travelled, do you see, and at Koenigsberg, Prussia Improper (so styled because there's a sort of bleak hungry sun there), you might remark over a venerable house-porch, a certain Chaldee inscription; and brief as it is, a mere glance at it used absolutely to change the mood of every bearded passenger. In they turned, one and all; the young and lightsome, with no irreverent pause, the aged and decrepit, with a sensible alacrity,—'twas the Grand Rábbi's abode, in short. Struck with curiosity, I lost no time in learning Syriac—(these are vowels, you dogs,—follow my stick's end in the mud—*Celarent, Darii, Ferio!*) and one morning presented myself spelling-book in hand, a, b, c,—I picked it out letter by letter, and what was the purport of this miraculous posy?

Some cherished legend of the past you'll say—  
*"How Moses hocus-pocust Egypt's land with fly and locust,"*—or, *"How to Jonah sounded harshish, Get thee up and go to Tarshish,"*—or, *"How the angel meeting Balaam, Straight his ass returned a salaam"* ;  
 —in no wise !—*"Shackabrach—Boach—somebody or other—Isaac, Re-cei-ver, Pur-cha-ser and Ex-chan-ger of Stolen goods !"* So talk to me of the religion of a bishop ! I have renounced all bishops save Bishop Beveridge—mean to live so—and die—*As some Greek dog-sage, dead and merry, Hellward bound in Charon's wherry—With food for both worlds, under and upper, Lupine-seed and Hecate's supper, and never an obolus . . .* (Though thanks to you, or this Intendant thro' you, or this Bishop through his Intendant—I possess a burning pocket-full of *zwanzigers*) . . . *To pay the Stygian ferry !*

*1st Policeman.* There is the girl, then ; go and deserve them the moment you have pointed out to us Signor Luigi and his mother. (*To the rest*) I have been noticing a house yonder, this long while—not a shutter unclosed since morning !

*2nd Policeman.* Old Luca Gaddi's, that owns the silk-mills here : he dozes by the hour—wakes up, sighs deeply, says he should like to be Prince Metternich, and then dozes again, after having

bidden young Sebald, the foreigner, set his wife to playing draughts: never molest such a household, they mean well.

*Bluphocks.* Only, cannot you tell me something of this little Pippa, I must have to do with? —one could make something of that name. Pippa —that is, short for Felippa—rhyming to—*Panurge consults Hertrippa—Believ'st thou, King Agrippa?* Something might be done with that name.

*2nd Policeman.* Put into rhyme that your head and a ripe musk-melon would not be dear at half a *zwanziger!* Leave this fooling, and look out—the afternoon's over or nearly so.

*3rd Policeman.* Where in this passport of Signor Luigi does our principal instruct you to watch him so narrowly? There? what's there beside a simple signature? (That English fool's busy watching.)

*2nd Policeman.* Flourish all round — “put all possible obstacles in his way”; oblong dot at the end — “Detain him till further advices reach you”; scratch at bottom — “send him back on pretence of some informality in the above”; ink-spurt on right-hand side, (which is the case here) — “Arrest him at once,” why and wherefore, I don't concern myself, but my instructions amount to this: if Signor Luigi leaves home to-night for

Vienna, well and good—the passport deposited with us for our *visa* is really for his own use, they have misinformed the Office, and he means well; but let him stay over to-night—there has been the pretence we suspect—the accounts of his corresponding and holding intelligence with the Carbonari are correct—we arrest him at once—to-morrow comes Venice—and presently, Spielberg. Bluphocks makes the signal sure enough! That is he, entering the turret with his mother, no doubt.

III.—EVENING. *Inside the Turret.* LUIGI and his Mother entering.

*Mother.* If there blew wind, you'd hear a long sigh, easing

The utmost heaviness of music's heart.

*Luigi.* Here in the archway?

*Mother.* Oh, no, no—in farther,  
Where the echo is made—on the ridge.

*Luigi.* Here surely, then.  
How plain the tap of my heel as I leaped up!  
Hark—"Lucius Junius!" The very ghost of a  
voice,  
Whose body is caught and kept by . . . what are  
those?

Mere withered wall-flowers, waving overhead ?  
They seem an elvish group with thin bleached  
hair

Who lean out of their topmost fortress—looking  
And listening, mountain men, to what we say,  
Hands under chin of each grave earthy face :  
Up and show faces all of you !—“ *All of you !* ”  
That’s the king’s dwarf with the scarlet comb ;  
now hark—

Come down and meet your fate ! Hark—“ *Meet  
your fate !* ”

*Mother.* Let him not meet it, my Luigi—do not  
Go to his city ! putting crime aside,  
Half of these ills of Italy are feigned—  
Your Pellicos and writers for effect,  
Write for effect.

*Luigi.* Hush ! say A. writes, and B.

*Mother.* These A.’s and B.’s write for effect, I  
say.

Then, evil is in its nature loud, while good  
Is silent—you hear each petty injury—  
None of his daily virtues ; he is old,  
Quiet, and kind, and densely stupid—why  
Do A. and B. not kill him themselves ?

*Luigi.* They teach  
Others to kill him—me—and, if I fail,  
Others to succeed ; now, if A. tried and failed

I could not teach that : mine's the lesser task.  
Mother, they visit night by night . . .

*Mother.* —You, Luigi?

Ah, will you let me tell you what you are?

*Luigi.* Why not? Oh, the one thing you fear  
to hint,

You may assure yourself I say and say  
Ever to myself; at times—nay, even as now  
We sit, I think my mind is touched—suspect  
All is not sound : but is not knowing that,  
What constitutes one sane or otherwise?  
I know I am thus—so all is right again;  
I laugh at myself as through the town I walk,  
And see men merry as if no Italy  
Were suffering; then I ponder—“I am rich,  
“Young, healthy; why should this fact trouble me,  
“More than it troubles these?” But it does  
trouble me!

No—trouble's a bad word—for as I walk  
There's springing and melody and giddiness,  
And old quaint terms and passages of my youth—  
Dreams long forgotten, little in themselves—  
Return to me—whatever may amuse me,  
And earth seems in a truce with me, and heaven  
Accords with me, all things suspend their strife,  
The very cicalas laugh “There goes he, and there!  
“Feast him, the time is short—he is on his way

“ For the world’s sake—feast him this once, our friend ! ”

And in return for all this, I can trip  
Cheerfully up the scaffold-steps : I go  
This evening, mother !

*Mother.* But mistrust yourself—  
Mistrust the judgment you pronounce on him.

*Luigi.* Oh, there I feel—am sure that I am  
right !

*Mother.* Mistrust your judgment, then, of the  
mere means

Of this wild enterprise : say you are right,—  
How should one in your state e’er bring to pass  
What would require a cool head, a cold heart,  
And a calm hand ? You never will escape.

*Luigi.* Escape—to even wish that, would spoil  
all !

The dying is best part of it. Too much  
Have I enjoyed these fifteen years of mine,  
To leave myself excuse for longer life—  
Was not life pressed down, running o’er with joy,  
That I might finish with it ere my fellows  
Who, sparelier feasted, make a longer stay ?  
I was put at the board-head, helped to all  
At first ; I rise up happy and content.  
God must be glad one loves His world so much—  
I can give news of earth to all the dead



Who ask me :—last year's sunsets, and great stars  
That had a right to come first and see ebb  
The crimson wave that drifts the sun away—  
Those crescent moons with notched and burning  
rims

That strengthened into sharp fire, and there  
stood,

Impatient of the azure—and that day  
In March, a double rainbow stopped the storm—  
May's warm, slow, yellow moonlit summer  
nights—

Gone are they, but I have them in my soul !

*Mother.* (He will not go !)

*Luigi.* You smile at me !

'Tis true.—

Voluptuousness, grotesqueness, ghastliness,  
Environ my devotedness as quaintly  
As round about some antique altar wreath  
The rose festoons, goats' horns, and oxen's skulls.

*Mother.* See now : you reach the city—you  
must cross

His threshold—how ?

*Luigi.* Oh, that's if we conspired !

Then would come pains in plenty, as you guess—  
But guess not how the qualities required  
For such an office—qualities I have—  
Would little stead me otherwise employed,

Yet prove of rarest merit here—here only.  
Every one knows for what his excellence  
Will serve, but no one ever will consider  
For what his worst defect might serve ; and yet  
Have you not seen me range our coppice yonder  
In search of a distorted ash ?—It happens  
The wry spoilt branch's a natural perfect bow !  
Fancy the thrice-sage, thrice-precautioned man  
Arriving at the palace on my errand !  
No, no—I have a handsome dress packed up—  
White satin here, to set off my black hair—  
In I shall march—for you may watch your life  
out  
Behind thick walls—make friends there to betray  
you ;  
More than one man spoils everything. March  
straight—  
Only, no clumsy knife to fumble for—  
Take the great gate, and walk (not saunter) on  
Thro' guards and guards—I have rehearsed it  
all  
Inside the Turret here a hundred times—  
Don't ask the way of whom you meet, observe,  
But where they cluster thickliest is the door  
Of doors ; they'll let you pass—they'll never  
blab  
Each to the other, he knows not the favourite,

Whence he is bound and what's his business  
now—

Walk in—straight up to him—you have no  
knife—

Be prompt, how should he scream? Then, out  
with you!

Italy, Italy, my Italy!

You're free, you're free! Oh mother, I could  
dream

They got about me—Andrea from his exile,  
Pier from his dungeon, Gaultier from his grave!

*Mother.* Well, you shall go. Yet seems this  
patriotism

The easiest virtue for a selfish man

To acquire! He loves himself—and next, the  
world—

If he must love beyond,—but nought between:

As a short-sighted man sees nought midway

His body and the sun above. But you

Are my adored Luigi—ever obedient

To my least wish, and running o'er with love—

I could not call you cruel or unkind!

Once more, your ground for killing him!—then  
go!

*Luigi.* Now do you ask me, or make sport of  
me?

How first the Austrians got these provinces—

(If that is all, I'll satisfy you soon)

. . . Never by conquest but by cunning, for  
That treaty whereby . . .

*Mother.*

Well?

*Luigi.*

(Sure he's arrived,

The tell-tale cuckoo—spring's his confidant,

And he lets out her April purposes!)

Or . . . better go at once to modern times—

He has . . . they have . . . In fact, I under-  
stand

But can't re-state the matter; that's my boast;

Others could reason it out to you, and prove

Things they have made me feel.

*Mother.*

Why go to-night?

Morn's for adventure. Jupiter is now

A morning-star. I cannot hear you, Luigi!

*Luigi.* "I am the bright and morning-star,"

God saith—

And, "to such an one I give the morning-star!"

The gift of the morning-star—have I God's gift

Of the morning-star?

*Mother.*

Chiara will love to see

That Jupiter an evening-star next June.

*Luigi.* True, mother. Well for those who live  
through June!

Great noontides, thunder - storms, all glaring  
pomps

Which triumph at the heels of sovereign June  
Leading his glorious revel thro' our world.  
Yes, Chiara will be here—

*Mother.* In June—remember,  
Yourself appointed that month for her coming—

*Luigi.* Was that low noise the echo?

*Mother.* The  
night-wind.

She must be grown—with her blue eyes upturned  
As if life were one long and sweet surprise :  
In June she comes.

*Luigi.* We were to see together  
The Titian at Treviso—there, again !

[*From without is heard the voice of PIPPA,  
singing—*

*A king lived long ago,  
In the morning of the world,  
When earth was nigher heaven than now ;  
And the king's locks curled  
Disparting o'er a forehead full  
As the milk-white space 'twixt horn and horn  
Of some sacrificial bull—  
Only calm as a babe new-born :  
For he was got to a sleepy mood.  
So safe from all decrepitude,  
From age with its bane, so sure gone by,*

*(The Gods so loved him while he dreamed,  
That, having lived thus long, there seemed  
No need the king should ever die.*

*Luigi.* No need that sort of king should ever die !

*Among the rocks his city was :  
Before his palace, in the sun,  
He sate to see his people pass,  
And judge them every one  
From its threshold of smooth stone.  
They haled him many a valley-thief  
Caught in the sheep-pens—robber-chief,  
Swarthly and shameless—beggar-cheat—  
Spy-prowler—or rough pirate found  
On the sea-sand left aground ;  
And sometimes clung about his feet,  
With bleeding lip and burning cheek,  
A woman, bitterest wrong to speak  
Of one with sullen thickset brows :  
And sometimes from the prison-house  
The angry priests a pale wretch brought,  
Who through some chink had pushed and  
pressed,  
On knees and elbows, belly and breast,  
Worm-like into the temple,—caught  
At last there by the very God*

*Who ever in the darkness strode  
Backward and forward, keeping watch  
O'er his brazen bowls, such rogues to catch !  
And these, all and every one,  
The king judged, sitting in the sun.*

*Luigi.* That king should still judge sitting in  
the sun !

*His councillors, on left and right,  
Looked anxious up,—but no surprise  
Disturbed the king's old smiling eyes,  
Where the very blue had turned to white.  
'Tis said a Python scared one day  
The breathless city, till he came,  
With forky tongue and eyes on flame,  
Where the old king sate to judge alway ;  
But when he saw the sweepy hair,  
Girt with a crown of berries rare  
Which the God will hardly give to wear  
To the maiden who singeth, dancing bare  
In the altar-smoke by the pine-torch lights,  
At his wondrous forest rites,—  
Beholding this, he did not dare,  
Approach that threshold in the sun,  
Assault the old king smiling there.  
Such grace had kings when the world begun !*  
[PIPPA passes.]

*Luigi.* And such grace have they, now that  
the world ends !

The Python in the city, on the throne,  
And brave men, God would crown for slaying him,  
Lurk in bye-corners lest they fall his prey.  
Are crowns yet to be won, in this late trial,  
Which weakness makes me hesitate to reach ?  
'Tis God's voice calls, how could I stay ?  
Farewell !

*Talk by the way, while PIPPA is passing from the  
Turret to the Bishop's brother's House, close to  
the Duomo S. Maria. Poor Girls sitting on the  
steps.*

*1st. Girl.* There goes a swallow to Venice—  
the stout sea-farer !  
Seeing those birds fly, makes one wish for wings.  
Let us all wish ; you, wish first !

*2nd Girl.* I ? This sunset  
To finish.

*3rd Girl.* That old . . . somebody I know,  
Greyer and older than my grandfather,  
To give me the same treat he gave last week—  
Feeding me on his knee with fig-peckers,  
Lampreys, and red Breganze-wine, and mumbling  
The while some folly about how well I fare,



To be let eat my supper quietly—

Since had he not himself been late this morning  
Detained at—never mind where,—had he not . . .

“Eh, baggage, had I not!”—

*2nd Girl.*

How she can lie!

*3rd Girl.* Look there—by the nails—

*2nd Girl.*

What makes your fingers red?

*3rd Girl.* Dipping them into wine to write bad  
words with,

On the bright table—how he laughed!

*1st Girl.*

My turn:

Spring's come and summer's coming: I would  
wear

A long loose gown—down to the feet and hands—

With plaits here, close about the throat, all day:

And all night lie, the cool long nights, in bed—

And have new milk to drink—apples to eat,

Deuzans and junetings, leather-coats . . . ah,

I should say,

This is away in the fields—miles!

*3rd Girl.*

Say at once

You'd be at home—she'd always be at home!

Now comes the story of the farm among

The cherry orchards, and how April snowed

White blossoms on her as she ran: why, fool,

They've rubbed the chalk-mark out, how tall  
you were,

Twisted your starling's neck, broken his cage,  
Made a dunghill of your garden—

*1st Girl.*

They, destroy

My garden since I left them? well—perhaps!

I would have done so—so I hope they have!

A fig-tree curled out of our cottage wall—

They called it mine, I have forgotten why,

It must have been there long ere I was born;

Cric—cric—I think I hear the wasps o'erhead

Pricking the papers strung to flutter there

And keep off birds in fruit-time—coarse long  
papers,

And the wasps eat them, prick them through and  
through.

*3rd Girl.* How her mouth twitches! Where  
was I?—before

She broke in with her wishes and long gowns

And wasps—would I be such a fool!—Oh, here!

This is my way—I answer every one

Who asks me why I make so much of him—

(If you say, you love him—straight “he'll not be  
gulled”)

“He that seduced me when I was a girl

Thus high—had eyes like yours, or hair like  
yours,

Brown, red, white,”—as the case may be—that  
pleases!

(See how that beetle burnishes in the path—  
There sparkles he along the dust! and, there—  
Your journey to that maize-tuft's spoilt at least!)

*1st Girl.* When I was young, they said if you  
killed one

Of those sunshiny beetles, that his friend  
Up there, would shine no more that day nor next.

*2nd Girl.* When you were young? Nor are you  
young, that's true!

How your plump arms, that were, have dropped  
away!

Why, I can span them! Cecco beats you still?

No matter, so you keep your curious hair.

I wish they'd find a way to dye our hair

Your colour—any lighter tint, indeed,

Than black—the men say they are sick of  
black,

Black eyes, black hair!

*4th Girl.* Sick of yours, like enough!

Do you pretend you ever tasted lampreys

And ortolans? Giovita, of the palace,

Engaged (but there's no trusting him) to slice  
me

Polenta with a knife that has cut up

An ortolan.

*2nd Girl.* Why, there! is not that, Pippa

We are to talk to, under the window,—quick,—

Where the lights are ?

1st Girl. No—or she would sing ;  
—For the Intendant said . . .

3rd Girl. Oh, you sing first—  
Then, if she listens and comes close . . . I'll tell  
you,

Sing that song the young English noble made,  
Who took you for the purest of the pure,  
And meant to leave the world for you—what  
fun !

2nd Girl. [*Sings.*]

You'll love me yet !—and I can tarry  
Your love's protracted growing :  
June reared that bunch of flowers you carry  
From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartfull now—some seed  
At least is sure to strike  
And yield—what you'll not pluck indeed,  
Not love, but, may be, like !

You'll look at least on love's remains,  
A grave's one violet :  
Your look?—that pays a thousand pains.  
What's death?—You'll love me yet !

3rd Girl. [*To PIPPA who approaches.*] Oh, you  
may come closer—we shall not eat you ! Why,  
you seem the very person that the great rich

handsome Englishman has fallen so violently in love with ! I'll tell you all about it.

IV.—NIGHT. *The Palace by the Duomo.* MONSIGNOR,  
*dismissing his Attendants.*

*Monsignor.* Thanks, friends, many thanks. I chiefly desire life now, that I may recompense every one of you. Most I know something of already. What, a repast prepared ? *Benedicto benedicatur . . .* ugh . . . ugh ! Where was I ? Oh, as you were remarking, Ugo, the weather is mild, very unlike winter-weather,—but I am a Sicilian, you know, and shiver in your Julys here : To be sure, when 'twas full summer at Messina, as we priests used to cross in procession the great square on Assumption Day, you might see our thickest yellow tapers twist suddenly in two, each like a falling star, or sink down on themselves in a gore of wax. But go, my friends, but go ! [*To the Intendant.*] Not you, Ugo ! [*The others leave the apartment.*] I have long wanted to converse with you, Ugo !

*Intendant.* Uguccio—

*Monsignor.* . . . 'guccio Stefani, man ! of Ascoli, Fermo, and Fossombruno ;—what I do need instructing about, are these accounts of your administration of my poor brother's affairs. Ugh !

I shall never get through a third part of your accounts: take some of these dainties before we attempt it, however: are you bashful to that degree? For me, a crust and water suffice.

*Intendant.* Do you choose this especial night to question me?

*Monsignor.* This night, Ugo. You have managed my late brother's affairs since the death of our elder brother—fourteen years and a month, all but three days. On the 3rd of December, I find him . . .

*Intendant.* If you have so intimate an acquaintance with your brother's affairs, you will be tender of turning so far back—they will hardly bear looking into, so far back.

*Monsignor.* Ay, ay, ugh, ugh,—nothing but disappointments here below! I remark a considerable payment made to yourself on this 3rd of December. Talk of disappointments! There was a young fellow here, Jules, a foreign sculptor, I did my utmost to advance, that the church might be a gainer by us both: he was going on hopefully enough, and of a sudden he notifies to me some marvellous change that has happened in his notions of art: here's his letter,—“He never had a clearly conceived Ideal within his brain till to-day. Yet since his hand could

manage a chisel, he has practised expressing other men's Ideals—and, in the very perfection he has attained to, he foresees an ultimate failure—his unconscious hand will pursue its prescribed course of old years, and will reproduce with a fatal expertness the ancient types, let the novel one appear never so palpably to his spirit: there is but one method of escape—confiding the virgin type to as chaste a hand, he will turn painter instead of sculptor, and paint, not carve, its characteristics,"—strike out, I dare say, a school like Correggio: how think you, Ugo?

*Intendant.* Is Correggio a painter?

*Monsignor.* Foolish Jules! and yet, after all, why foolish? He may—probably will, fail egregiously; but if there should arise a new painter, will it not be in some such way by a poet, now, or a musician, (spirits who have conceived and perfected an Ideal through some other channel) transferring it to this, and escaping our conventional roads by pure ignorance of them; eh, Ugo? If you have no appetite, talk at least, Ugo!

*Intendant.* Sir, I can submit no longer to this course of yours: first, you select the group of which I formed one,—next you thin it gradually,—always retaining me with your smile,—and so

do you proceed till you have fairly got me alone with you between four stone walls: and now then? Let this farce, this chatter end now—what is it you want with me?

*Monsignor.* Ugo . . .

*Intendant.* From the instant you arrived, I felt your smile on me as you questioned me about this and the other article in those papers—why your brother should have given me this villa, that *podere*,—and your nod at the end meant,—what?

*Monsignor.* Possibly that I wished for no loud talk here: if once you set me coughing, Ugo!—

*Intendant.* I have your brother's hand and seal to all I possess: now ask me what for! what service I did him—ask me!

*Monsignor.* I had better not—I should rip up old disgraces—let out my poor brother's weaknesses. By the way, Maffeo of Forli, (which, I forgot to observe, is your true name) was the interdict ever taken off you, for robbing that church at Cesena?

*Intendant.* No, nor needs be—for when I murdered your brother's friend, Pasquale, for him . . .

*Monsignor.* Ah, he employed you in that business, did he? Well, I must let you keep, as you say, this villa and that *podere*, for fear the



world should find out my relations were of so indifferent a stamp! Maffeo, my family is the oldest in Messina, and century after century have my progenitors gone on polluting themselves with every wickedness under Heaven: my own father . . . rest his soul!—I have, I know, a chapel to support that it may rest: my dear two dead brothers were,—what you know tolerably well; I, the youngest, might have rivalled them in vice, if not in wealth, but from my boyhood I came out from among them, and so am not partaker of their plagues. My glory springs from another source; or if from this, by contrast only,—for I, the bishop, am the brother of your employers, Ugo. I hope to repair some of their wrong, however; so far as my brother's ill-gotten treasure reverts to me, I can stop the consequences of his crime; and not one *soldo* shall escape me. Maffeo, the sword we quiet men spurn away, you shrewd knaves pick up and commit murders with; what opportunities the virtuous forgo, the villainous seize. Because, to pleasure myself, apart from other considerations, my food would be millet-cake, my dress sackcloth, and my couch straw,—am I therefore to let you, the off-scouring of the earth, seduce the poor and ignorant, by appropriating a pomp these will be

sure to think lessens the abominations so unaccountably and exclusively associated with it? Must I let villas and *poderes* go to you, a murderer and thief, that you may beget by means of them other murderers and thieves? No . . . if my cough would but allow me to speak!

*Intendant.* What am I to expect? You are going to punish me?

*Monsignor.* Must punish you, Maffeo. I cannot afford to cast away a chance. I have whole centuries of sin to redeem, and only a month or two of life to do it in! How should I dare to say . . .

*Intendant.* "Forgive us our trespasses"—

*Monsignor.* My friend, it is because I avow myself a very worm, sinful beyond measure, that I reject a line of conduct you would applaud, perhaps: shall I proceed, as it were, a-pardoning?—I?—who have no symptom of reason to assume that aught less than my strenuousest efforts will keep myself out of mortal sin, much less, keep others out. No—I do trespass, but will not double that by allowing you to trespass.

*Intendant.* And suppose the villas are not your brother's to give, nor yours to take? Oh, you are hasty enough just now!

*Monsignor.* 1, 2—No. 3!—ay, can you read the

substance of a letter, No. 3, I have received from Rome? It is precisely on the ground there mentioned, of the suspicion I have that a certain child of my late elder brother, who would have succeeded to his estates, was murdered in infancy by you, Maffeo, at the instigation of my late brother—that the Pontiff enjoins on me not merely the bringing that Maffeo to condign punishment, but the taking all pains, as guardian of that infant's heritage for the Church, to recover it parcel by parcel, howsoever, whensoever, and wheresoever. While you are now gnawing those fingers, the police are engaged in sealing up your papers, Maffeo, and the mere raising my voice brings my people from the next room to dispose of yourself. But I want you to confess quietly, and save me raising my voice. Why, man, do I not know the old story? The heir between the succeeding heir, and that heir's ruffianly instrument, and their complot's effect, and the life of fear and bribes, and ominous smiling silence? Did you throttle or stab my brother's infant? Come, now!

*Intendant.* So old a story, and tell it no better? When did such an instrument ever produce such an effect? Either the child smiles in his face, or, most likely, he is not fool enough to put

himself in the employer's power so thoroughly—the child is always ready to produce—as you say—howsoever, wheresoever, and whensoever.

*Monsignor.* Liar!

*Intendant.* Strike me? Ah, so might a father chastise! I shall sleep soundly to-night at least, though the gallows await me to-morrow; for what a life did I lead! Carlo of Cesena reminds me of his connivance, every time I pay his annuity (which happens commonly thrice a year). If I remonstrate, he will confess all to the good bishop—you!

*Monsignor.* I see thro' the trick, caitiff! I would you spoke truth for once; all shall be sifted, however—seven times sifted.

*Intendant.* And how my absurd riches encumbered me! I dared not lay claim to above half my possessions. Let me but once unbosom myself, glorify Heaven, and die!

Sir, you are no brutal, dastardly idiot like your brother I frightened to death—let us understand one another. Sir, I will make away with her for you—the girl—here close at hand; not the stupid obvious kind of killing; do not speak—know nothing of her or me! I see her every day—saw her this morning: of course there is to be no killing; but at Rome the courtesans perish off

every three years, and I can entice her thither—have, indeed, begun operations already. There's a certain lusty, blue-eyed, florid-complexioned, English knave I and the police employ occasionally.—You assent, I perceive—no, that's not it—assent I do not say—but you will let me convert my present havings and holdings into cash, and give me time to cross the Alps? 'Tis but a little black-eyed, pretty singing Felippa, gay silk-winding girl. I have kept her out of harm's way up to this present; for I always intended to make your life a plague to you with her! 'Tis as well settled once and for ever: some women I have procured will pass Bluphocks, my handsome scoundrel, off for somebody; and once Pippa entangled!—you conceive? Through her singing? Is it a bargain?

[*From without is heard the voice of PIPPA,  
singing—*

*Over-head the tree-tops meet—  
Flowers and grass spring 'neath one's feet—  
There was nought above me, and nought below,  
My childhood had not learned to know!  
For, what are the voices of birds  
—Ay, and of beasts,—but words—our words,  
Only so much more sweet?*

*The knowledge of that with my life begun !  
But I had so near made out the sun,  
And counted your stars, the Seven and One,  
Like the fingers of my hand :  
Nay, I could all but understand  
Wherefore through heaven the white moon ranges ;  
And just when out of her soft fifty changes  
No unfamiliar face might overlook me—  
Suddenly God took me !*

[PIPPA passes.]

*Monsignor.* [Springing up.] My people—one  
and all—all—within there! Gag this villain—  
tie him hand and foot! He dares—I know not  
half he dares—but remove him—quick! *Miserere  
mei, Domine!* Quick, I say!

*PIPPA'S Chamber again. She enters it.*

The bee with his comb,  
The mouse at her dray,  
The grub in its tomb,  
Wile winter away ;  
But the fire-fly and hedge-shrew and lob-worm, I  
prayer,  
How fare they ?  
Ha, ha, best thanks for your counsel, my Zanze—  
“ Feast upon lampreys, quaff the Breganze ”—

The summer of life's so easy to spend,  
And care for to-morrow so soon put away!  
But winter hastens at summer's end,  
And fire-fly, hedge-shrew, lob-worm, pray,  
How fare they?  
No bidding me then to . . . what did she say?  
"Pare your nails pearlwise, get your small feet  
shoes

"More like . . . (what said she?)—and less like  
canoes—"

How pert that girl was!—would I be those pert  
Impudent staring women! it had done me,  
However, surely no such mighty hurt  
To learn his name who passed that jest upon me:  
No foreigner, that I can recollect,  
Came, as she says, a month since, to inspect  
Our silk-mills—none with blue eyes and thick  
rings

Of English-coloured hair, at all events.  
Well—if old Luca keep his good intents,  
We shall do better: see what next year brings!  
I may buy shoes, my Zanze, not appear  
More destitute than you, perhaps, next year!  
Bluph . . . something! I had caught the uncouth  
name

But for Monsignor's people's sudden clatter  
Above us—bound to spoil such idle chatter

As ours ; it were, indeed, a serious matter  
If silly talk like ours should put to shame  
The pious man, the man devoid of blame,  
The . . . ah, but —ah, but, all the same,  
No mere mortal has a right  
To carry that exalted air ;  
Best people are not angels quite—  
While—not the worst of people's doings scare  
The devils ; so there's that proud look to spare !  
Which is mere counsel to myself, mind ! for  
I have just been the holy Monsignor !  
And I was you too, Luigi's gentle mother,  
And you too, Luigi !—how that Luigi started  
Out of the Turret—doubtlessly departed  
On some good errand or another,  
For he past just now in a traveller's trim,  
And the sullen company that prowled  
About his path, I noticed, scowled  
As if they had lost a prey in him.  
And I was Jules the sculptor's bride,  
And I was Ottima beside,  
And now what am I ?—tired of fooling !  
Day for folly, night for schooling !  
New year's day is over and spent,  
Ill or well, I must be content !  
Even my lily's asleep, I vow :  
Wake up—here's a friend I've pluckt you !



See—call this flower a heart's-ease now !  
And something rare, let me instruct you,  
Is this—with petals triply swollen,  
Three times spotted, thrice the pollen,  
While the leaves and parts that witness  
The old proportions and their fitness  
Here remain, unchanged, unmoved now—  
So call this pampered thing improved now !  
Suppose there's a king of the flowers  
And a girl-show held in his bowers—  
“Look ye, buds, this growth of ours,”  
Says he, “Zanze from the Brenta,  
I have made her gorge polenta  
Till both cheeks are near as bouncing  
As her . . . name there's no pronouncing !  
See this heightened colour too—  
For she swilled Breganze wine  
Till her nose turned deep carmine—  
'Twas but white when wild she grew !  
And only by this Zanze's eyes  
Of which we could not change the size,  
The magnitude of what's achieved  
Otherwise, may be perceived !”  
Oh what a drear, dark close to my poor day !  
How could that red sun drop in that black cloud !  
Ah, Pippa, morning's rule is moved away,  
Dispensed with, never more to be allowed,

Day's turn is over—now arrives the night's—  
Oh, Lark, be day's apostle  
To mavis, merle and throstle,  
Bid them their betters jostle  
From day and its delights!  
But at night, brother Howlet, far over the  
    woods,  
Toll the world to thy chantry—  
Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods  
Full complines with gallantry—  
Then, owls and bats, crows and twats,  
Monks and nuns, in a cloister's moods,  
Adjourn to the oak-stump pantry!

*[After she has begun to undress herself.*

Now, one thing I should like really to know :  
How near I ever might approach all these  
I only fancied being, this long day—  
—Approach, I mean, so as to touch them—so  
As to . . . in some way . . . move them—if you  
    please,

Do good or evil to them some slight way.  
For instance, if I wind  
Silk to-morrow, my silk may bind

*[Sitting on the bedside.*

And broider Ottima's cloak's hem—  
Ah, me and my important part with them,  
This morning's hymn half promised when I rose!

True in some sense or other, I suppose,  
Though I passed by them all, and felt no sign.  
[*As she lies down.*  
God bless me! I can pray no more to-night.  
No doubt, some way or other, hymns say right.

*All service is the same with God—  
With God, whose puppets, best and worst,  
Are we : there is no last nor first.—*  
[*She sleeps.*

ROBERT BROWNING.



BOOK VII  
THE BOOK OF MEMORY



My Lost Youth



OFTEN I think of the beautiful town  
That is seated by the sea ;  
Often in thought go up and down  
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,  
And my youth comes back to me.  
And a verse of a Lapland song  
Is haunting my memory still :  
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts.”

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,  
And catch, in sudden gleams,  
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,  
And islands that were the Hesperides  
Of all my boyish dreams.  
And the burden of that old song,

It murmurs and whispers still :  
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts.”

I remember the black wharves and the slips,  
And the sea-tides tossing free ;  
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
And the magic of the sea.

And the voice of that wayward song  
Is singing and saying still :  
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts.”

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,  
And the fort upon the hill ;  
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,  
The drum-beat repeated o’er and o’er,  
And the bugle wild and shrill.

And the music of that old song  
Throbs in my memory still :  
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts.”



I remember the sea-fight far away,  
How it thundered o'er the tide !  
And the dead captains, as they lay  
In their graves o'erlooking the tranquil bay,  
Where they in battle died.

And the sound of that mournful song  
Goes through me with a thrill :  
“ A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts.”

I can see the breezy dome of groves,  
The shadows of Deering's Woods ;  
And the friendships old and the early loves  
Come back with a sabbath sound, as of doves  
In quiet neighbourhoods.

And the verse of that sweet old song,  
It flutters and murmurs still :  
“ A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts.”

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart  
Across the schoolboy's brain ;  
The song and the silence in the heart,  
That in part are prophecies, and in part  
Are longings wild and vain.

And the voice of that fitful song

Sings on, and is never still :  
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts.”

There are things of which I may not speak ;  
There are dreams that cannot die ;  
There are thoughts that make the strong heart  
weak,  
And bring a pallor into the cheek,  
And a mist before the eye.  
And the words of that fatal song  
Come over me like a chill :  
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts.”

Strange to me now are the forms I meet  
When I visit the dear old town ;  
But the native air is pure and sweet,  
And the trees that o’ershadow each well-known  
street,  
As they balance up and down,  
Are singing the beautiful song,  
Are sighing and whispering still :  
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts.”

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,  
And with joy that is almost pain  
My heart goes back to wander there,  
And among the dreams of the days that were,  
I find my lost youth again,  
And the strange and beautiful song,  
The groves are repeating it still :  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts."

LONGFELLOW.

There was a Boy    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

THERE was a boy ; ye knew him well, ye cliffs  
And islands of Winander ! many a time,  
At evening, when the earliest stars began  
To move along the edges of the hills,  
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,  
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake ;  
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands  
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth  
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,  
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,  
That they might answer him.—And they would  
shout

Across the watery vale, and shout again,  
Responsive to his call,—with quivering peals,  
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud  
Redoubled and redoubled ; concourse wild  
Of mirth and jocund din ! And, when it chanced  
That pauses of deep silence mocked his skill,  
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung  
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise  
Has carried far into his heart the voice  
Of mountain torrents ; or the visible scene  
Would enter unawares into his mind  
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,  
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received  
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This boy was taken from his mates, and died  
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.  
Fair is the spot, most beautiful the vale  
Where he was born : the grassy churchyard  
hangs  
Upon a slope above the village school ;  
And through that churchyard when my way has  
led  
At evening, I believe that oftentimes  
A long half-hour together I have stood  
Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies !

WORDSWORTH.

B REAK, break, break,  
On thy cold grey stones, O Sea !  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play !  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill ;  
But O for the touch of a vanished hand  
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.

TENNYSON.

Three Years She Grew      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪

T HREE years she grew in sun and shower.  
Then nature said, " A lovelier flower  
On earth was never sown ;  
This child I to myself will take ;  
She shall be mine, and I will make  
A lady of my own.

“ Myself will to my darling be  
Both law and impulse : and with me  
The girl, in rock and plain,  
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,  
Shall feel an overseeing power  
To kindle or restrain.

“ She shall be sportive as the fawn  
That wild with glee across the lawn  
Or up the mountain springs ;  
And hers shall be the breathing balm,  
And hers the silence and the calm  
Of mute insensate things.

“ The floating clouds their state shall lend  
To her ; for her the willow bend :  
Nor shall she fail to see  
Even in the motions of the storm  
Grace that shall mould the maiden’s form  
By silent sympathy.

“ The stars of midnight shall be dear  
To her ; and she shall lean her ear  
In many a secret place  
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,  
And beauty born of murmuring sound  
Shall pass into her face.

“ And vital feelings of delight  
Shall rear her form to stately height,  
Her virgin bosom swell ;  
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give  
While she and I together live  
Here in this happy dell.”

Thus nature spake—the work was done—  
How soon my Lucy’s race was run !  
She died, and left to me  
This heath, this calm and quiet scene ;  
The memory of what has been,  
And never more will be.

WORDSWORTH.

WHEN to the sessions of sweet silent  
thought

I summon up remembrance of things past,  
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,  
And with old woes now wail my dear time’s  
waste :

Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,  
For precious friends hid in death’s dateless night,  
And weep afresh love’s long-since cancell’d woe,  
And moan the expense of many a vanish’d sight :  
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,  
And heavily from woe to woe tell o’er

The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,  
Which I new pay as if not paid before.

But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,  
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

SHAKESPEARE.

Surprised by Joy    ∪    ∪    ∪    ∪    ∪

**S**URPRISED by joy, impatient as the wind,  
I turned to share the transport—Oh! with  
whom

But thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,  
That spot which no vicissitude can find!  
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind—  
But how could I forget thee?—Through what  
power,

Even for the least division of an hour,  
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind  
To my most grievous loss?—That thought's  
return

Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,  
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,  
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more:  
That neither present time, nor years unborn  
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

WORDSWORTH.





TEARS, idle tears, I know not what they  
mean,

Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
Sad as the last which reddens over one  
That sinks with all we love below the verge ;  
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square ;  
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
On lips that are for others ; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

TENNYSON.



AH, what avails the sceptred race,  
 Ah, what the form divine !  
 What every virtue, every grace,  
 Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes  
 May weep, but never see,  
 A night of memories and sighs  
 I consecrate to thee.

LANDOR.



YE banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,  
 How can ye blume sae fair !  
 How can ye chant, ye little birds,  
 And I sae fu' o' care !

Thou'lt break my heart, thou bonnie bird  
 That sings upon the bough,  
 Thou minds me o' the happy days  
 When my fause Luvè was true.

Thou'lt break my heart, thou bonnie bird  
 That sings beside thy mate ;  
 For sae I sat, and sae I sang,  
 And wist na' o' my fate.

Aft hae I roved by bonnie Doon  
To see the woodbine twine,  
And ilka bird sang o' its luvè ;  
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,  
Frae aff its thorny tree ;  
And my fause lover staw the rose,  
But left the thorn wi' me.

BURNS.

Night-thoughts



WHEN on my bed the moonlight falls,  
I know that in thy place of rest  
By that broad water of the west,  
There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
As slowly steals a silver flame  
Along the letters of thy name,  
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;  
From off my bed the moonlight dies ;  
And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn  
A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
And in the dark church like a ghost  
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

TENNYSON.

Echo                                    

COME to me in the silence of the night ;  
Come in the speaking silence of a dream ;  
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as  
bright  
As sunlight on a stream ;  
Come back in tears,  
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

Oh dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,  
Whose wakening should have been in  
Paradise,  
Where souls brimfull of love abide and meet ;  
Where thirsting longing eyes  
Watch the slow door  
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live  
My very life again though cold in death :

Come back to me in dreams, that I may give  
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath :  
Speak low, lean low,  
As long ago, my love, how long ago !

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

San Lorenzo Giustiniani's Mother



“And we the shadows of the dream.”—SHELLEY.

I HAD not seen my son's dear face  
(He chose the cloister by God's grace)  
Since it had come to full flower-time.  
I hardly guessed at its perfect prime,  
That folded flower of his dear face.

Mine eyes were veiled by mists of tears  
When on a day in many years  
One of his Order came. I thrilled,  
Facing, I thought, that face fulfilled.  
I doubted, for my mists of tears.

His blessing be with me for ever !  
My hope and doubt were hard to sever.  
—That altered face, those holy weeds.  
I filled his wallet and kissed his beads,  
And lost his echoing feet for ever.

If to my son my alms were given  
I know not, and I wait for Heaven.  
He did not plead for child of mine,  
But for another Child divine,  
And unto Him it was surely given.

There is One alone who cannot change ;  
Dreams are we, shadows, visions strange ;  
And all I give is given to One.  
I might mistake my dearest son,  
But never the Son who cannot change.

ALICE MEYNELL.

In Memoriam



I.

BE near me when my light is low,  
When the blood creeps, and the nerves  
prick  
And tingle ; and the heart is sick,  
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust ;  
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,  
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
And men the flies of latter spring,  
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
To point the term of human strife,  
And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day.

II.

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side?  
Is there no baseness we would hide?  
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden shame  
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:  
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?  
There must be wisdom with great Death:  
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall :  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.

III.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush ;  
Or underneath the barren bush  
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;

Come, wear the form by which I know  
Thy spirit in time among thy peers ;  
The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change  
May breathe, with many roses sweet,  
Upon the thousand waves of wheat,  
That ripple round the lonely grange ;

Come : not in watches of the night,  
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,  
Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
And like a finer light in light.



IV.

I shall not see thee. Dare I say  
     No spirit ever brake the band  
     That stays him from the native land  
 Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,  
     But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
     Where all the nerve of sense is numb;  
 Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
     With gods in unconjectured bliss,  
     O, from the distance of the abyss  
 Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear  
     The wish too strong for words to name;  
     That in this blindness of the frame  
 My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

V.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
     For underfoot the herb was dry;  
     And genial warmth; and o'er the sky  
 The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn  
    Unwavering : not a cricket chirr'd .  
    The brook alone far-off was heard,  
And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
    And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes  
    That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes  
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd  
    From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,  
    The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
    Withdrew themselves from me and night,  
    And in the house light after light  
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read  
    Of that glad year which once had been,  
    In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,  
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke  
    The silent-speaking words, and strange  
    Was love's dumb cry defying change  
To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell  
On doubts that drive the coward back,  
And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
The dead man touch'd me from the past,  
And all at once it seem'd at last  
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd  
About empyreal heights of thought,  
And came on that which is, and caught  
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out  
The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—  
The blows of Death. At length my trance  
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame  
In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
Or ev'n for intellect to reach  
Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field :

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
A breeze began to tremble o'er  
The large leaves of the sycamore,  
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,  
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung  
The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
The lilies to and fro, and said

"The dawn, the dawn," and died away ;  
And East and West, without a breath,  
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,  
To broaden into boundless day.

TENNYSON.

BOOK VIII  
STEPPING WESTWARD



## Stepping Westward



[While my fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Katrine, one fine evening after sunset, in our road to a hut where, in the course of our tour, we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, "What ! you are stepping westward ?"]

" *W*HAT ! you are stepping westward ?"  
—" Yea "

'Twould be a *wildish* destiny,  
If we, who thus together roam  
In a strange land, and far from home,  
Were in this place the guests of chance :  
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,  
Though home or shelter he had none,  
With such a sky to lead him on ?

The dewy ground was dark and cold ;  
Behind, all gloomy to behold ;

And stepping westward seemed to be  
A kind of *heavenly* destiny ;  
I liked the greeting ; 'twas a sound  
Of something without place or bound ;  
And seemed to give me spiritual right  
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake  
Was walking by her native lake :  
The salutation had to me  
The very sound of courtesy :  
Its power was felt ; and while my eye  
Was fixed upon the glowing sky,  
The echo of the voice inwrought  
A human sweetness with the thought  
Of travelling through the world that lay  
Before me in my endless way.

WORDSWORTH.

Friends in Paradise



THEY are all gone into the world of light !  
And I alone sit lingering here ;  
Their very memory is fair and bright,  
And my sad thoughts doth clear :—



It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast,  
Like stars upon some gloomy grove,  
Or those faint beams in which this hill is drest  
After the sun's remove.

I see them walking in an air of glory,  
Whose light doth trample on my days :  
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,  
Mere glimmering and decays.

O holy Hope ! and high Humility,  
High as the heavens above !  
These are your walks, and you have shewed them  
me,  
To kindle my cold love.

Dear beauteous Death ! the Jewel of the Just,  
Shining nowhere but in the dark ;  
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,  
Could man outlook that mark !

He that hath found some fledged bird's nest, may  
know  
At first sight if the bird be flown ;  
But what fair dell or grove he sings in now,  
That is to him unknown.

And yet, as Angels in some brighter dreams  
    Call to the soul, when man doth sleep ;  
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted  
    themes,  
And into glory peep.

H. VAUGHAN.

The Hound of Heaven    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

I FLED Him, down the nights and down the  
    days ;

I fled Him, down the arches of the years ;  
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
    Of my own mind ; and in the mist of tears  
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

    Up vistaed hopes I sped ;  
    And shot, precipitated  
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,  
From those strong Feet that followed, followed  
    after.

    But with unhurrying chase,  
    And unperturbèd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
    They beat—and a Voice beat  
    More instant than the Feet—  
“ All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.”

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,  
 By many a hearted casement, curtained red,  
     Trellised with intertwining charities ;  
 (For, though I knew His love Who followèd,  
     Yet was I sore adread  
 Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside)  
 But, if one little casement parted wide,  
     The gust of His approach would clash it to.  
 Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.  
 Across the margent of the world I fled,  
     And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,  
     Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars ;  
     Fretted to dulcet jars  
 And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon,  
 I said to dawn : Be sudden—to eve : Be soon ;  
     With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over  
     From this tremendous Lover !  
 Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see !  
     I tempted all His servitors, but to find  
 My own betrayal in their constancy,  
 In faith to Him their fickleness to me,  
     Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.  
 To all swift things for swiftness did I sue ;  
     Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.  
     But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,  
     The long savannahs of the blue ;  
     Or whether, Thunder-driven,

They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven,  
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o'  
their feet :—

Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.

Still with unhurrying chase,

And unperturbèd pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

Came on the following Feet,

And a Voice above their beat—

“Naught shelters thee, who wilt not  
shelter Me.”

I sought no more that after which I strayed

In face of man or maid ;

But still within the little children's eyes

Seems something, something that replies,

*They* at least are for me, surely for me !

I turned me to them very wistfully ;

But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair

With dawning answer there,

Their angel plucked them from me by the  
hair.

“Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share

With me” (said I) “your delicate fellowship ;

Let me greet you lip to lip,

Let me twine with you caresses.

Wantoning

With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,  
    Banqueting  
With her in her wind-walled palace,  
Underneath her azured daïs  
Quaffing, as your taintless way is,  
    From a chalice  
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring."'  
    So it was done :  
*I* in their delicate fellowship was one—  
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.  
    I knew all the swift importings  
    On the wilful face of skies ;  
    I knew how the clouds arise  
    Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings ;  
        All that's born or dies  
    Rose and drooped with—made them shapers  
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine—  
    With them joyed and was bereaven.  
    I was heavy with the even,  
    When she lit her glimmering tapers  
    Round the day's dead sanctities.  
    I laughed in the morning's eyes.  
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,  
    Heaven and I wept together,  
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine ;  
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart  
    I laid my own to beat,

And share commingling heat ;  
But not by that, by that, was eased my human  
smart.

In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.  
For ah ! we know not what each other says,  
These things and I ; in sound *I* speak—  
*Their* sound is but their stir, they speak by  
silences.

Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth ;  
Let her, if she would owe me,  
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me  
The breasts o' her tenderness :

Never did any milk of hers once bless

My thirsting mouth.

Nigh and nigh draws the chase,

With unperturbèd pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

And past those noisèd Feet

A Voice comes yet more fleet—

“ Lo ! naught contents thee, who content'st  
not Me.”

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke !

My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,

And smitten me to my knee ;

I am defenceless utterly,

I slept, methinks, and woke,

And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.  
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,  
I shook the pillaring hours,  
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with  
smears,

I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—  
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap,  
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,  
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.

Yea, faileth now even dream  
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;  
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist  
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,  
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account  
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.

Ah! is Thy love indeed  
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,  
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

Ah! must—

Designer infinite!—

Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst  
limn with it?

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the  
dust;

And now my heart is as a broken fount,  
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever  
From the dank thoughts that shiver

Upon the sighful branches of my mind.

Such is ; what is to be ?

The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind ?

I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds ;

Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds

From the hid battlements of Eternity,

Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then

Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash  
again ;

But not ere him who summoneth

I first have seen, enwound

With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned ;

His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.

Whether man's heart or life it be which yields

Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields

Be dunged with rotten death ?

Now of that long pursuit

Comes on at hand the bruit !

That Voice is round me like a bursting sea :

“ And is thy earth so marred,

Shattered in shard on shard ?

Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me

“ Strange, piteous, futile thing !

Wherefore should any set thee love apart ?

Seeing none but I makes much of naught ” (He  
said),



“ And human love needs human meriting :  
How hast thou merited—  
Of all man’s clotted clay the dingiest clot ?  
Alack, thou knowest not  
How little worthy of any love thou art !  
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
Save Me, save only Me ?  
All which I took from thee I did but take,  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might’st seek it in My arms.  
All which thy child’s mistake  
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home :  
Rise, clasp My hand, and come.”

Halts by me that footfall :  
Is my gloom, after all,  
Shade of His hand, oustretched caressingly ?  
“ Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,  
I am He Whom thou seekest !  
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest  
Me.”

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

THY voice is on the rolling air ;  
I hear thee where the waters run ;  
Thou standest in the rising sun,  
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;  
But tho' I seem in star and flower  
To feel thee some diffusive power,  
I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;  
My love is vaster passion now;  
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,  
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;  
I have thee still, and I rejoice;  
I prosper, circled with thy voice;  
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

TENNYSON.

Up-hill                                    

DOES the road wind up-hill all the way?  
Yes, to the very end.

Will the day's journey take the whole long day?  
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?  
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.  
May not the darkness hide it from my face?  
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night ?

Those who have gone before.

Then must I knock, or call when just in sight ?

They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak ?

Of labour you shall find the sum.

Will there be beds for me and all who seek ?

Yea, beds for all who come.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

Requiescat    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

STREW on her roses, roses,  
And never a spray of yew !  
In quiet she reposes ;  
Ah ! would that I did too !

Her mirth the world required ;  
She bath'd it in smiles of glee.  
But her heart was tired, tired,  
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,  
In mazes of heat and sound.  
But for peace her soul was yearning,  
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,  
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath.  
To-night it doth inherit  
The vasty hall of death.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Fidele



FEAR no more the heat o' the sun  
Nor the furious winter's rages ;  
Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages :  
Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great,  
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke ;  
Care no more to clothe and eat ;  
To thee the reed is as the oak :  
The sceptre, learning, physic, must  
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash  
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone ;  
Fear not slander, censure rash ;  
Thou hast finished joy and moan :  
All lovers young, all lovers must  
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

SHAKESPEARE.



THERE, through the long, long summer  
hours,

The golden light should lie,  
And thick young herbs and groups of flowers  
Stand in their beauty by.

The oriole should build and tell  
His love-tale, close beside my cell ;

The idle butterfly  
Should rest him there, and there be heard  
The housewife-bee and humming bird.

And what, if cheerful shouts at noon,  
Come, from the village sent,  
Or songs of maids, beneath the moon,  
With fairy laughter blent ?

And what if, in the evening light,  
Betrothed lovers walk in sight  
Of my low monument ?

I would the lovely scene around  
Might know no sadder sight nor sound.

I know, I know I should not see  
The season's glorious show ;  
Nor would its brightness shine for me,  
Nor its wild music flow ;

But if, around my place of sleep,  
The friends I love should come to weep,  
    They might not haste to go.  
Soft airs and song, and light and bloom,  
Should keep them lingering by my tomb.

These to their soften'd hearts should bear  
    The thought of what has been,  
And speak of one who cannot share  
    The gladness of the scene ;  
Whose part in all the pomp that fills  
The circuit of the summer hills,  
    Is —— that his grave is green ;  
And deeply would their hearts rejoice  
To hear again his living voice.

BRYANT.

### The Scholar-Gipsy

“ There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford, who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there, and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond gipsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtilty of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem as that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars, who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gipsies ; and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told

them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others: that himself had learned much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned."—Glanvil's *Vanity of Dogmatising*, 1661.

GO, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill;  
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes!

No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,  
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,  
Nor the cropped herbage shoot another head.

But when the fields are still,  
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,  
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen  
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd  
green,

Come, shepherd, and again begin the quest!

Here, where the reaper was at work of late—

In this high field's dark corner, where he  
leaves

His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,  
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,  
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to  
use—

Here will I sit and wait,

While to my ear from uplands far away  
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,  
With distant cries of reapers in the corn—  
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reaped  
field,  
And here till sun-down, shepherd ! will I be.  
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies  
peep.  
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see  
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep ;  
And air-swept lindens yield  
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed  
showers  
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,  
And bower me from the August sun with  
shade ;  
And the eye travels down to Oxford's  
towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—  
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again !  
The story of the Oxford scholar poor,  
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,  
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,  
One summer morn forsook



His friends, and went to learn the gipsy lore,  
And roamed the world with that wild brother-  
hood  
And came, as most men deemed, to little  
good,  
But came to Oxford and his friends no  
more.

But once, years after, in the country lanes,  
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,  
Met him, and of his way of life inquired ;  
Whereat he answered, that the gipsy crew,  
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired  
The workings of men's brains.  
And they can bind them to what thoughts they  
will,  
“ And I,” he said, “ the secret of their art,  
When fully learned, will to the world impart :  
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this  
skill.”

This said, he left them, and returned no more.—  
But rumours hung about the country side,  
That the lost scholar long was seen to stray,  
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue tied,  
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of grey,  
The same the gipsies wore.

Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring ;  
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,  
On the warm ingle bench, the smock-frocked  
boors

Had found him seated at their entering,

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.

And I myself seem half to know thy looks,

And put the shepherds, wanderer! on thy  
trace ;

And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks

I ask if thou hast passed their quiet place ;

Or in my boat I lie

Moored to the cool bank in the summer heats,

'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine  
fills,

And watch the warm, green-muffled Cunner  
Hills,

And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy  
retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground.

Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,

Returning home on summer nights, have met

Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe,

Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,

As the punt's rope chops round ;

And leaning backward in a pensive dream,  
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers  
Plucked in shy fields and distant Wychwood  
bowers,  
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit  
stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no more!—  
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come  
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,  
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee  
roam,  
Or cross a stile into the public way.  
Oft thou hast given them store  
Of flowers—the frail-leaf'd, white anemone,  
Dark bluebells drench'd with dew of summer  
eves,  
And purple orchises with spotted leaves—  
But none hath words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here  
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,  
Men who through those wide fields of breezy  
grass  
Where black-winged swallows haunt the glitter-  
ing Thames,  
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,  
Have often passed thee near

Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown ;  
Marked thy outlandish garb, thy figure spare,  
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air—  
But, when they came from bathing, thou  
wast gone.

At some lone homestead in the Cumner Hills,  
Where at her open door the housewife darns,  
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate  
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.  
Children, who early range these slopes and  
late  
For cresses from the rills,  
Have known thee eyeing, all an April day,  
The springing pastures and the feeding kine ;  
And marked thee, when the stars come out  
and shine  
Through the long dewy grass move slow  
away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley wood—  
Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged way  
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush  
you see  
With scarlet patches tagged and shreds of grey,  
Above the forest ground called Thessaly—  
The blackbird, picking food

Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all ;  
So often has he known thee past him stray  
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a withered spray,  
And waiting for the spark from heaven to  
fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill  
Where home through flooded fields foot-  
travellers go,  
Have I not passed thee on the wooden bridge  
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,  
Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry  
ridge ?  
And thou hast climbed the hill,  
And gained the white brow of the Cumner  
range ;  
Turned once to watch, while thick the snow-  
flakes fall,  
The line of festal light in Christ-Church  
hall—  
Then sought thy straw in some sequestered  
grange.

But what—I dream ! Two hundred years are  
flown  
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,  
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe

That thou wert wander'd from the studious walls  
To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy tribe ;  
And thou from earth art gone  
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid ;  
Some country nook, where o'er thy unknown  
grave  
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles  
wave—  
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours !  
For what wears out the life of mortal men ?  
'Tis that from change to change their being  
rolls ;  
'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,  
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls  
And numb the elastic powers.  
Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,  
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,  
To the just-pausing Genius we remit  
Our worn-out life, and are—what we have  
been.

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou perish so ?  
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire ;  
Else wert thou long since numbered with the  
dead !

Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire !  
The generations of thy peers are fled,  
And we ourselves shall go ;  
But thou possessest an immortal lot,  
And we imagine thee exempt from age  
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,  
Because thou hadst—what we, alas ! have  
not !

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers  
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,  
Firm to their mark, not spent on other  
things ;  
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,  
Which much to have tried, in much been  
baffled, brings.  
O life unlike to ours !  
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,  
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he  
strives,  
And each half lives a hundred different lives ;  
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in  
hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven ! and we,  
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,  
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly willed,

Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,  
Whose vague resolves never have been  
fulfilled ;

For whom each year we see  
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new ;  
Who hesitate and falter life away,  
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day—  
Ah ! do not we, wanderer ! await it too ?

Yes, we await it !—but it still delays,  
And then we suffer ! and amongst us one,  
Who most has suffered, takes dejectedly  
His seat upon the intellectual throne ;  
And all his store of sad experience he  
Lays bare of wretched days ;  
Tell us his misery's birth and growth and signs,  
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,  
Add how the breast was soothed, and how  
the head,  
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest ! and we others pine,  
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,  
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear ;  
With close-lipped patience for our only friend,  
Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair—  
But none has hope like thine.



Thou through the fields and through the woods  
    dost stray,  
Roaming the country side, a truant boy,  
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,  
    And every doubt long blown by time  
    away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,  
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames ;  
    Before this strange disease of modern life,  
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,  
    Its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts, was  
    rife—

    Fly hence, our contact fear !  
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood !  
    Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern  
    From her false friend's approach in Hades  
    turn,  
    Wave us away, and keep thy solitude !

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,  
Still clutching the inviolable shade,  
    With a free, onward impulse brushing through,  
By night, the silver'd branches of the glade—  
    Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,  
    On some mild pastoral slope

Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales  
Freshen thy flowers as in former years  
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,  
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales.

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly !  
For strong the infection of our mental strife,  
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for  
rest ;  
And we should win thee from thine own fair life,  
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.  
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,  
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfixed thy  
powers,  
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting  
made ;  
And then thy glad perennial youth would  
fade,  
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like  
ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles !  
—As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,  
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow  
Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,  
The fringes of a southward-facing brow  
Among the Ægean isles ;

And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,  
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,  
Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steeped in  
brine—

And knew the intruders on his ancient  
home,

The young light-hearted masters of the waves—  
And snatched his rudder, and shook out more  
sail;

And day and night held on indignantly  
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,  
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,

To where the Atlantic raves  
Outside the western straits; and unbent sails  
There, where down cloudy cliffs, through  
sheets of foam,

Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;  
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Remember      

REMEMBER me when I am gone away,  
Gone far away into the silent land;  
When you can no more hold me by the hand,  
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.

Remember me when no more day by day  
    You tell me of our future that you planned :  
    Only remember me ; you understand  
It will be late to counsel then or pray.  
Yet if you should forget me for a while  
    And afterwards remember, do not grieve :  
    For if the darkness and corruption leave  
    A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,  
Better by far you should forget and smile  
    Than that you should remember and be sad.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

Elegy



WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
    The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,  
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,  
    And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimm'ring landscape on the sight,  
    And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,  
    And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds :

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower  
The moping owl does to the moon complain  
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bower,  
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,  
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring  
heap,  
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,  
The swallow twittering from the straw-built  
shed,  
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,  
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
Or busy housewife ply her evening care ;  
No children run to lisp their sire's return,  
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,  
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke .  
How jocund did they drive their team afield !  
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy  
stroke !

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;  
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Await alike th' inevitable hour :  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,  
If mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,  
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted  
vault  
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn, or animated bust,  
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?  
Can honour's voice provoke the silent dust,  
Or flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of death ?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;  
Hands that the rod of empire might have  
swayed,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre :

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll ;  
Chill penury repressed their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear ;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden that, with dauntless  
breast,  
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,  
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,  
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of listening senates to command,  
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,  
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade : nor circumscribed alone  
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined ;  
Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,  
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind ;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,  
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,  
Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride  
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,  
Their sober wishes never learned to stray ;  
Along the cool sequestered vale of life  
They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect,  
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture  
decked,  
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered  
Muse,  
The place of fame and elegy supply ;  
And many a holy text around she strews,  
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,  
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,  
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind ?



On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
Some pious drops the closing eye requires ;  
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,  
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of the unhonoured dead,  
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate,  
If chance by lonely contemplation led,  
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,  
“Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn  
Brushing with hasty steps the dew away,  
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

“There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,  
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,  
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,  
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

“Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,  
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove ;  
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,  
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

“One morn I missed him on th' accustomed hill,  
Along the heath and near his favourite tree ;  
Another came ; nor yet beside the rill,  
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he :

“The next, with dirges due in sad array,  
Slow through the church-way path we saw  
him borne,—  
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the  
lay  
Graved on the stone beneath yon agèd thorn.”

#### THE EPITAPH.<sup>1</sup>

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth  
A youth, to fortune and to fame unknown :  
Fair science frowned not on his humble birth,  
And melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere ;  
Heaven did a recompense as largely send :  
He gave to misery (all he had) a tear,  
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished)  
a friend.

<sup>1</sup> “Before the Epitaph, Gray originally inserted a very beautiful stanza, which was printed in some of the first editions, but afterwards omitted, because he thought that it was too long a parenthesis in this place. The lines however, in themselves demand preservation :

“There scattered oft, the earliest of the year,  
By hands unseen, are showers of violets found ;  
The redbreast loves to build and warble there,  
And little footsteps lightly print the ground.”

No farther seek his merits to disclose,  
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode  
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),  
The bosom of his Father and his God.

GRAY.

Ode to Heaven



CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

*First Spirit.*

PALACE-ROOF of cloudless nights!  
Paradise of golden lights!

Deep, immeasurable, vast,  
Which art now, and which wert then!  
Of the Present and the Past,  
Of the eternal Where and When,  
Presence-chamber, temple, home,  
Ever-canopying dome,  
Of acts and ages yet to come!

Glorious shapes have life in thee,  
Earth, and all earth's company;  
Living globes which ever throng  
Thy deep chasms and wildernesses;  
And green worlds that glide along;

And swift stars with flashing tresses ;  
And icy moons most cold and bright,  
And mighty suns beyond the night,  
Atoms of intensest light.

Even thy name is as a god,  
Heaven ! for thou art the abode  
Of that Power which is the glass  
Wherein man his nature sees.  
Generations as they pass  
Worship thee with bended knees.  
Their unremaining gods and they  
Like a river roll away :  
Thou remainest such—always !—

*Second Spirit.*

Thou art but the mind's first chamber,  
Round which its young fancies clamber,  
Like weak insects in a cave,  
Lighted up by stalactites ;  
But the portal of the grave,  
Where a world of new delights  
Will make thy best glories seem  
But a dim and noonday gleam  
From the shadow of a dream !

*Third Spirit.*

Peace! the abyss is wreathed with scorn  
At your presumption, atom-born!

What is Heaven? and what are ye  
Who its brief expanse inherit?

What are suns and spheres which flee  
With the instinct of that Spirit

Of which ye are but a part?

Drops which Nature's mighty heart

Drives through thinnest veins! Depart!

What is Heaven? a globe of dew,  
Filling in the morning new

Some eyed flower whose young leaves waken  
On an unimagined world:

Constellated suns unshaken,  
Orbits measureless, are furled

In that frail and fading sphere,

With ten millions gathered there

To tremble, gleam, and disappear.

SHELLEY.

A Vision    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

I SAW Eternity the other night  
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,  
All calm, as it was bright:—

And round beneath it. Time, in hours, days,  
years,  
Driven by the spheres,  
Like a vast shadow moved ; in which the world  
And all her train were hurled.

H. VAUGHAN.

Night



THE sun descending in the West,  
The evening star does shine ;  
The birds are silent in their nest,  
And I must seek for mine.

The moon, like a flower  
In heaven's high bower,  
With silent delight,  
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy groves,  
Where flocks have took delight.  
Where lambs have nibbled, silent moves  
The feet of angels bright ;  
Unseen, they pour blessing,  
And joy without ceasing,  
On each bud and blossom,  
And each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest  
Where birds are covered warm ;  
They visit caves of every beast,  
To keep them all from harm :

    If they see any weeping  
    That should have been sleeping,  
    They pour sleep on their head,  
    And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey,  
They pitying stand and weep ;  
Seeking to drive their thirst away,  
And keep them from the sheep.

    But, if they rush dreadful,  
    The angels, most heedful,  
    Receive each mild spirit,  
    New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes  
Shall flow with tears of gold :  
And pitying the tender cries,  
And walking round the fold :

    Saying : " Wrath by His meekness,  
    And, by His health, sickness,  
    Is driven away  
    From our immortal day.

“ And now beside thee, bleating lamb,  
I can lie down and sleep,  
Or think on Him who bore thy name,  
Graze after thee, and weep.

For, washed in life's river,  
My bright mane for ever  
Shall shine like the gold,  
As I guard o'er the fold.”

BLAKE.

At Night    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

H OME, home from the horizon far and clear,  
Hither the soft wings sweep ;  
Flocks of the memories of the day draw near  
The dovecote doors of sleep.

O which are they that come through sweetest  
light  
Of all these homing birds ?  
Which with the straightest and the swiftest  
flight ?  
Your words to me, your words !

ALICE MEYNELL.





PRAISED be the fathomless universe  
 For life and joy and for love, sweet love !  
 But praise ! praise ! praise !  
 For the cool enfolding arms  
 Of sweet and delicate death.

WALT WHITMAN.



FEAR death ?—to feel the fog in my throat,  
 The mist in my face,  
 When the snows begin, and the blasts denote,  
 I am nearing the place,  
 The power of the night, the press of the storm,  
 The post of the foe ;  
 Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,  
 Yet the strong man must go :  
 For the journey is done and the summit attained,  
 And the barriers fall,  
 Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be  
 gained,  
 The reward of it all.  
 I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,  
 The best and the last !

I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and  
forbore,  
And bade me creep past.  
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my  
peers  
The heroes of old,  
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears  
Of pain, darkness and cold.  
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,  
The black minute's at end,  
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,  
Shall dwindle, shall blend,  
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of  
pain,  
Then a light, then thy breast,  
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,  
And with God be the rest!

ROBERT BROWNING.

Last Lines    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

NO coward soul is mine,  
No trembler in the world's storm-  
troubled sphere:  
I see Heaven's glories shine,  
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,  
Almighty, ever-present Deity !  
Life—that in me has rest,  
As I—undying Life—have power in Thee !

Vain are the thousand creeds  
That move men's hearts : unutterably vain ;  
Worthless as withered weeds,  
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one  
Holding so fast by Thine infinity ;  
So surely anchored on  
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love  
Thy spirit animates eternal years,  
Pervades and broods above,  
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,  
And suns and universes ceased to be,  
And Thou wert left alone,  
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,  
Nor atom that his might could render void :  
Thou, THOU art Being and Breath,  
And what Thou art can never be destroyed.

EMILY BRONTË.

BOOK IX  
THE ETERNAL SPRING



Ode to the West Wind    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

I.

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's  
being,

Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
Pestilence-stricken multitudes : O thou,  
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,  
Each like a corpse within its grave, until  
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill  
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)  
With living hues and odours plain and hill :

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere ;  
Destroyer and preserver ; hear, oh, hear !

II.

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's  
    commotion,  
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,  
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and  
    Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning : there are spread  
On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,  
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge  
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,  
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night  
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,  
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere  
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst : oh, hear !

III.

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams  
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,  
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,



Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,  
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers  
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers  
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them ! Thou  
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below  
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear  
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,  
And tremble and despoil themselves : oh, hear !

IV.

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear ;  
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee ;  
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free  
Than thou, O uncontrollable ! If even  
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,  
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed  
Scarce seemed a vision ; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.  
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !  
I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed  
One too like thee : tameless, and swift, and proud.

v.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :  
What if my leaves are falling like its own !  
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,  
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,  
My spirit ! Be thou me, impetuous one !

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe  
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth !  
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !  
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy ! O, Wind,  
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?

SHELLEY.



INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS  
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

“The child is father of the man ;  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety.”

THERE was a time when meadow, grove,  
and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem  
Apparelled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
It is not now as it hath been of yore ;—  
Turn wheresoe’er I may,  
By night or day,  
The things which I have seen I now can see no  
more.

The rainbow comes and goes,  
And lovely is the rose ;  
The moon doth with delight  
Look round her when the heavens are bare ;  
Waters on a starry night  
Are beautiful and fair ;

The sunshine is a glorious birth ;  
But yet I know, where'er I go,  
That there hath passed away a glory from the  
earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,  
And while the young lambs bound  
As to the tabor's sound,  
To me alone there came a thought of grief :  
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,  
And I again am strong :  
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep,  
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong ;  
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,  
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,  
And all the earth is gay ;  
Land and sea  
Give themselves up to jollity,  
And with the heart of May  
Doth every beast keep holiday ;—  
Thou child of joy,  
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou  
happy shepherd boy !

Ye blessed creatures, I have heard the call  
Ye to each other make ; I see  
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee ;—

My heart is at your festival,  
My head hath its coronal,  
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.  
Oh evil day! if I were sullen  
While the earth itself is adorning,  
This sweet May-morning,  
And the children are pulling,  
On every side,  
In a thousand valleys far and wide,  
Fresh flowers, while the sun shines warm,  
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm:—  
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!  
But there's a tree, of many, one,  
A single field which I have looked upon,  
Both of them speak of something that is gone:  
The pansy at my feet  
Doth the same tale repeat:  
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?  
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come

From God, who is our home :  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy !  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
    Upon the growing boy,  
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,  
    He sees it in his joy ;  
The youth, who daily farther from the east  
    Must travel, still is nature's priest,  
    And by the vision splendid  
    Is on his way attended ;  
At length the man perceives it die away,  
And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own ;  
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,  
And, even with something of a mother's mind,  
    And no unworthy aim,  
    The homely nurse doth all she can  
To make her foster-child, her inmate man,  
    Forget the glories he hath known,  
And that imperial palace whence he came.

Behold the child among his new-born blisses,  
A six-years' darling of a pigmy size !  
See where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,  
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,  
With light upon him from his father's eyes !

See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,  
Some fragment from his dream of human life,  
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art ;  
    A wedding or a festival,  
    A mourning or a funeral ;  
    And this hath now his heart,  
And unto this he frames his song :  
    Then will he fit his tongue  
To dialogues of business, love, or strife ;  
    But it will not be long  
    Ere this be thrown aside,  
    And with new joy and pride  
The little actor cons another part ;  
Filling from time to time his “humorous stage ”  
With all the persons, down to palsied age,  
That life brings with her in her equipage ;  
    As if his whole vocation  
    Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie  
    Thy soul's immensity ;  
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep  
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,  
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,  
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—  
    Mighty prophet ! seer blest !  
    On whom those truths do rest,

Which we are toiling all our lives to find,  
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave ;  
Thou, over whom thy immortality  
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,  
A presence which is not to be put by ;  
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might  
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,  
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke  
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,  
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife ?  
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,  
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,  
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life !

O joy ! that in our embers  
Is something that doth live,  
That nature yet remembers  
What was so fugitive !

The thought of our past years in me doth breed  
Perpetual benediction : not indeed  
For that which is most worthy to be blest ;  
Delight and liberty, the simple creed  
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,  
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his  
breast :

Not for these I raise  
The song of thanks and praise ;



But for those obstinate questionings  
Of sense and outward things,  
Fallings from us, vanishings ;  
Blank misgivings of a creature  
Moving about in worlds not realised ;  
High instincts before which our mortal nature  
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised :

But for those first affections,  
Those shadowy recollections,  
Which, be they what they may,  
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,  
Are yet a master light of all our seeing ;  
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make  
Our noisy years seem moments in the being  
Of the eternal silence : truths that wake  
To perish never ;  
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,  
Nor man nor boy,  
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,  
Can utterly abolish or destroy !

Hence, in a season of calm weather,  
Though inland far we be,  
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea  
Which brought us hither,  
Can in a moment travel thither,  
And see the children sport upon the shore,  
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song !  
And let the young lambs bound  
As to the tabor's sound !

We in thought will join your throng,  
Ye that pipe and ye that play,  
Ye that through your hearts to-day  
Feel the gladness of the May !

What though the radiance which was once so  
bright

Be now for ever taken from my sight,  
Though nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower ;  
We will grieve not, rather find  
Strength in what remains behind ;  
In the primal sympathy  
Which having been must ever be,  
In the soothing thoughts that spring  
Out of human suffering,  
In the faith that looks through death,  
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And O ye fountains, meadows, hills, and groves,  
Think not of any severing of our loves !  
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might :  
I only have relinquished one delight  
To live beneath your more habitual sway.  
I love the brooks which down their channels fret

Even more than when I tripped lightly as they ;  
The innocent brightness of a new-born day  
Is lovely yet ;

The clouds that gather round the setting sun  
Do take a sober colouring from an eye  
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality ;  
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.  
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,  
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,  
To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

WORDSWORTH.

Labour and Love    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

LABOUR and love ! there are no other laws  
To rule the liberal action of that soul  
Which faith hath set beneath thy brief control,  
Or lull the empty fear that racks and gnaws ;

Labour ! then like a rising moon, the cause  
Of life shall light thine hour from pole to pole,  
Thou shalt taste health of purpose, and the roll  
Of simple joys unwind without a pause.

Love ! and thy heart shall cease to question why  
Its beating pulse was set to rock and rave ;  
Find but another heart this side the grave

To soothe and cling to,—thou hast life's reply.  
Labour and love! then fade without a sigh,  
Submerged beneath the inexorable wave.

EDMUND GOSSE.

“An Angel of the Night”



I DREAMED there would be Spring no more,  
That Nature's ancient power was lost;  
The streets were black with smoke and frost,  
They chattered trifles at the door:

I wandered from the noisy town,  
I found a wood with thorny boughs:  
I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
From youth and babe and hoary hairs:  
They called me in the public squares  
The fool that wears a crown of thorns:

They called me fool, they called me child:  
I found an angel of the night;  
The voice was low, the look was bright;  
He looked upon my crown and smiled:

He reached the glory of a hand,  
That seemed to touch it into leaf:  
The voice was not the voice of grief,  
The words were hard to understand.

TENNYSON.

The Eternal Spring      ∞      ∞      ∞      ∞

PASSING away, saith the World, passing  
away :

Chances, beauty, and youth sapped day by day:

Thy life never continueth in one stay.

Is the eye waxen dim, is the dark hair changing  
to grey .

That hath won neither laurel nor bay?

I shall clothe myself in Spring and bud in  
May ;

Thou, root-stricken, shalt not rebuild thy decay

On my bosom for aye.

Then I answered : Yea.

Passing away, saith my Soul, passing away :

With its burden of fear and hope, of labour and  
play ;

Hearken what the past doth witness and say :

Rust in thy gold, a moth is in thine array,

A canker is in thy bud, thy leaf must decay.  
At midnight, at cockcrow, at morning, one certain  
day  
Lo, the Bridegroom shall come and shall not  
delay :  
Watch thou and pray.  
Then I answered : Yea.

Passing away, saith my God, passing away :  
Winter passeth after the long delay :  
New grapes on the vine, new figs on the tender  
spray,  
Turtle calleth turtle in Heaven's May.  
Though I tarry wait for Me, trust Me, watch and  
pray.  
Arise, come away, night is past and lo it is day,  
My love, My sister, My spouse, thou shalt hear  
Me say.  
Then I answered : Yea.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

New Year's Chimes



WHAT is the song the stars sing?  
(*And a million songs are as song of one.*)  
This is the song the stars sing :  
*Sweeter song's none.*

One to set, and many to sing,  
    (*And a million songs are as song of one*),  
One to stand, and many to cling,  
The many things, and the one Thing,  
    The one that runs not, the many that run.

The ever new weaveth the ever old  
    (*And a million songs are as song of one*).  
Ever telling the never told ;  
The silver saith, and the said is gold,  
    And done ever the never done.

The chase that's chased is the Lord o' the chase  
    (*And a million songs are as song of one*),  
And the pursued cries on the race ;  
    And the hounds in leash are the hounds that  
    run.

Hidden stars by the shown stars' sheen ;  
    (*And a million suns are but as one*) ;  
Colours unseen by the colours seen,  
And sounds unheard heard sounds between,  
    And a night is in the light of the sun.

An ambushade of light in night,  
    (*And a million secrets are but as one*),  
And a night is dark in the sun's light,  
    And a world in the world man looks upon.

Hidden stars by the shown stars' wings,  
    (*And a million cycles are but as one*),  
And a world with unapparent strings  
Knits the simulat world of things ;  
    Behold, and vision thereof is none.

The world above in the world below  
    (*And a million worlds are but as one*),  
And the One in all ; as the sun's strength so  
Strives in all strength, glows in all glow  
    Of the earth that wits not, and man thereon.

Braced in its own fourfold embrace  
    (*And a million strengths are as strength of one*),  
And round it all God's arms of grace,  
The world, so as the Vision says,  
    Doth with great lightning-tramples run.

And thunder bruiteth into thunder,  
    (*And a million sounds are as sound of one*),  
From stellate peak to peak is tossed a voice of  
    wonder,  
And the height stoops down to the depths there-  
    under,  
And sun leans forth to his brother-sun.



And the more ample years unfold  
    (*With a million songs as song of one*),  
A little new of the ever old,  
A little told of the never told,  
    Added act of the never done.

Loud the descant, and low the theme,  
    (*A million songs are as song of one*);  
And the dream of the world is dream in dream.  
But the one Is is, or nought could seem;  
    And the song runs round to the song begun.

This is the song the stars sing  
    (*Tonèd all in time*);  
Tintinnabulous, tuned to ring  
A multitudinous-single thing,  
    *Rung all in rhyme.*

FRANCIS THOMPSON.



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